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Country Roads magazine: has the move from the "country" influenced Baton Rouge advertisers' buying habits

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COUNTRY ROADS MAGAZINE: HAS THE MOVE FROM THE “COUNTRY”
INFLUENCED BATON ROUGE ADVERTISERS’ BUYING HABITS?

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by
Arianne P. Bellizaire
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2001
May 2004

DEDICATION

This master's thesis is dedicated to my husband, Reginald, who has been so supportive and understanding throughout this entire process. To my parents, thank you for believing in me and being proud of me through it all. There is no way I could have done this without the love, support and prayers of all of you.

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To the staff at *Country Roads*, I could not have hoped for a more enthusiastic and supportive “client.” I hope that this project benefits you even half as much as you have impacted me. Thank you for embracing this project and being open-minded about the results.

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ABSTRACT

Country Roads magazine celebrated its 20th anniversary in September of 2003. Founded by Dorcas Woods Brown in 1983, the publication prides itself on offering its readers a cultural events guide showcasing events, festivals and destinations from Natchez, Mississippi, to New Orleans, Louisiana. Readers have watched the magazine evolve over the years. However, nearly two years ago, readers experienced one of the biggest changes. The magazine moved its headquarters from St. Francisville to Baton Rouge. This study evaluated Baton Rouge advertisers' reactions the move.

The researcher modified and tested the Country-of-Origin Effects (COO) on a smaller scale by examining City-of-Origin effects. The following research questions were posed:

RQ1: What dimensions do Baton Rouge advertisers use when evaluating magazine brands?

RQ2: To what extent is COO an influence on the decision to buy advertising with a magazine?

Based on the researcher's review of the literature on the subjects of branding, country-of-origin effects and brand image, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: City-of-Origin is a dimension used in the consideration of whether to buy or continue to buy advertising with the magazine.

H2: The more experience that an advertiser has with the magazine, the less influence COO has on the buyers' perception of the brand.

H3: The more experience that an advertiser has with the magazine, the less influence COO has on the buyers' intention to buy.

The researcher conducted fourteen personal interviews. The first seven interviews were conducted with Baton Rouge advertisers who have been with the magazine consistently before, during and after the move. The second set of interviews were with advertisers who began advertising after the move.

Ultimately, although advertisers insisted that there is no direct correlation between where *Country Roads* is headquartered and whether or not they advertise, the underlying tone in most of the participants' responses was that the name "*Country Roads*" lends a certain amount of credibility to a magazine that is about "country things." Contrary to the concerns of the staff, having the "country" connotation actually works as a positive for the company rather than a negative.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“A magazine is not just a pound of paper. A magazine is a bunch of people with special interests and ideas communicating with a larger group who share the dedication to those interests.” -John Mack Carter¹

Country Roads magazine celebrated its 20th anniversary in September of 2003. Founded by Dorcas Woods Brown in 1983, the publication prides itself on offering its readers a cultural events guide showcasing events, festivals and destinations from Natchez, Mississippi, to New Orleans, Louisiana. Readers have watched the magazine evolve from a quarter-fold, 40 page black and white spread consisting of articles written by Brown, the then-publisher, editor, writer and advertising salesperson, to the now 80+ page colorful spread on tabloid sized paper with stitch-and-trim edging. Nearly two years ago, readers experienced another monumental change. The magazine moved its headquarters from St. Francisville to Baton Rouge.

1.1 *Country Roads* Magazine

In 1983, the entire state of Louisiana was gearing up for the 1984 New Orleans World Fair. Every parish, city and town recognized the cultural, as well as economical, importance of such a large showcase. While most consideration was given to what this would ultimately mean for the city of New Orleans, a free-spirited entrepreneur in St. Francisville, Louisiana, was more concerned with what her town could offer tourists as well.²

Having lived in West Feliciana Parish all her life, Dorcas Brown knew that the state offered so much more than the jazz-filled, litter-lined streets of the French Quarter. Her adventurous nature spurred her to design a small, well-meaning source of information about cultural and local events happening in West Feliciana and the surrounding parishes.³ Her goal for the magazine was to encourage tourists to include the area in their travel plans. Although her first several issues were successful, “...it became apparent that it was the people local to the region

between Natchez and Baton Rouge who were most interested in *Country Roads* magazine and the way of life it depicted.”⁴

Over the years, loyal readers of the publication have seen minor as well as drastic adjustments to the look and content of the publication. Twelve years after its inception, Dorcas welcomed her daughter Ashley and son-in-law James Fox-Smith into the business and with them came a broader scope and vision for the magazine. “Distribution was expanded to include the Northshore and New Orleans areas.”⁵ This was especially significant because it was in keeping with “...the historic importance of the Mississippi River as a defining influence in the region’s development and culture.”⁶ Hence the new motto for the publication became *From Natchez to New Orleans*.⁷

A year later, the format of the magazine changed from a quarterfold printed on grayish-brown paper to tabloid-sized stitch-and-trim with a full color cover. Circulation increased to a whopping 15,000.⁸

In 1997, distribution increased again to 20,000 with the addition of parishes north of Lake Pontchartrain and south of Baton Rouge.⁹ However, 1998 was astronomical with two increases in circulation (25,000 in May and 30,000 in August).¹⁰ Also, due to increased demand, *Country Roads* became a monthly publication.¹¹ This was no small feat for a staff of eight split between its St. Francisville headquarters and the small, satellite office in Baton Rouge which housed the sales staff.

In 2000, the staff commissioned a team of researchers, led by Ann Cunningham of LSU’sanship School of Mass Communication, to develop and implement a readership survey.¹² The results of the 1,500 surveys were compiled and released to the public. The information was also

used to create two special projects: the *Leisure Guide* which is inserted in the January issue and the *Menu Collection* which is inserted in the August issue.¹³

Through all of the changes in format and circulation patterns, the one thing that has remained consistent is *Country Roads*' reputation as a hometown magazine showcasing "Adventures Close to Home" for the two-hour tourist. The extensive calendar of events emphasizes things to do, things to see and things to learn.¹⁴ Readers also benefit from editorial content showcasing restaurant reviews, weekend getaways and pulsating cultural life.

In May of 2002, after careful consideration, the staff of *Country Roads* decided to merge both offices and move the headquarters from St. Francisville to downtown Baton Rouge. This study evaluated Baton Rouge advertisers' reactions the move.

1.2 The "Big Move"

In an interview with James Fox-Smith and Dorcas Brown, editor and publisher respectively, Fox-Smith expressed the main reason for the staff's thoughtful consideration of changing locations.

...surely, people were reading it in St. Francisville, but about 70% of our readers are from Baton Rouge, and have been. And that made us think, well we need to get closer to them. We can solve the problem of having two split offices by building the organization into a single cohesive unit, and we can be much, much closer to the center of our readership area. Geographically, it is entirely the center of what we write about. It's not where we began, but it is the center. It's the center that everything else feeds into. St. Francisville, love it as much as we do, will never be the geographic center.¹⁵

In the months that led up to the move, the staff at *Country Roads*, namely the management, spent many long and arduous hours contemplating the pros and cons of such a huge endeavor. Staff members even consulted several influential people in the magazine industry to get their thoughts on the possibility of a move. Since there was no formal public relations proposal, one of the objectives of this study was to use well-established public relations thought-processes to retroactively examine and evaluate the campaign.

The fundamentals of the campaign were examined using John Marston's RACE model. As Dennis L. Wilcox states in his book *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*, public relations is a process. It is a "series of actions, changes, or functions that bring about a result."¹⁶ The acronym describes the four key elements in the planning process: research, action, communication and evaluation.¹⁷ This four-step process is a logical, well-organized way to examine an effective communication campaign.

"Research" refers to not only the problem at hand and how it affects the audience in question, but the client itself. One of the most comprehensive ways to evaluate the client is to use the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. This method is used by many practitioners to scan both the internal and external environments of the client. It also matches the assets of the company to the problem at hand while better preparing the practitioner for any possible obstacles.

As the client in this case, *Country Roads* has many strengths. The first is its longevity in the industry. "The survivability of magazines, first introduced in 1741 by none other than Benjamin Franklin undoubtedly is due to their malleability. They are constantly ripe for reinvention."¹⁸

The fact that *Country Roads* has evolved over the past twenty years and is continuing to gain momentum in its market shows that it has overcome many of the obstacles faced by small publications. “The magazine industry is a difficult place for an independent to succeed: high paper prices, postage rate hikes, increasing manufacturing costs, and poor planning all take their toll on the small magazine publisher. Of the many magazines launched each year, more than half will die within 12 months, and 95% won’t be around to see a 5 year anniversary.”¹⁹

Another strength is that *Country Roads* has a wonderful reputation in the community. The magazine has been recognized locally and nationally for its strong editorial content. Dan Swetman, owner of Unfinished Furniture had this to say about the magazine: “...when we want to know ‘what’s happening’, not ‘what’s happened’, we travel through *Country Roads*. It’s the best trip you can take for cultural events in our area. I’m very proud to advertise in a fine publication that attracts such quality readers!”²⁰ Robert Bourgeois, owner of Quality Motors in New Roads said, “*Country Roads* is everyone’s hometown magazine. Everyone in New Roads reads it and most local businesses distribute it...”²¹

Readers are also very impressed with the publication. This was evident in their acceptance of the magazine’s decision to charge for subscriptions. “Our recent subscription renewal drive was a roaring success...the content of *Country Roads* owes much to readers’ advice and guidance.”²² Below are excerpts from letters to the editor in 1999 after being asked to pay for their previously free subscriptions:

I have really enjoyed receiving *Country Roads* this past year, so many interesting places I did not know were around Louisiana. Please continue to send *Country Roads*. I’ll look forward to receiving it.²³

Congratulations on your latest award! We're not a bit surprised. Each issue of *Country Roads* is a treat and a treasure to keep for future reference or mail to friends and family in 'foreign places.'²⁴

As usual your magazine is always of outstanding quality. It is one which my family looks forward to reading with each publication. Your August issue on the Arts was one of the finest and most complete on the Arts that I have ever seen. Yes, the Arts are alive and flourishing but it is because of the support which we receive from your fine magazine and many patrons which appreciate the work and energy from the many volunteers that make the Arts possible. We appreciate *Country Roads*, and keep up the fine work!²⁵

Yes, please keep my subscription to *Country Roads* magazine coming. I enjoy the variation of topics and calendar of events, also your features. Seems I'm learning about things and places along this area that I didn't know...even though I've lived here almost all of my life!²⁶

Thank you! Thank you! I always wondered how in the world I was receiving your wonderful issues free. Now I know. I can't live without *Country Roads*. We will marry October 9 and move to Minneapolis, Mn. What a treat it will be to receive *Country Roads* and stay in touch with 'home.' Enclosed is my check for one year subscription. Thanks for doing such a great job and keep up the good work!²⁷

Every organization has its weaknesses. For *Country Roads* it was having two separate offices approximately 45 minutes apart from each other. This hampered communications and made the advertising sales team's jobs more difficult. During an interview on June 30, 2003, James Fox-Smith summarized the difficulties faced:

I would say, we probably started to think about moving from a very practical standpoint. We had to figure out how we were going to be able to offer our salespeople a good working environment if we are 35 miles out of our primary sales market. How are we going to be able to approach an advertiser who wants to support their local region if we're not local to them? How are we going to make it a good supportive place to work if our sales people are working out of a little satellite office on Jefferson Highway, which is what we had before, and anytime you wanted to talk to a production person or an editorial person or an administrative person, you've got to drive to St. Francisville to do it. Those were all practical concerns. We did that through 2001, and it made things really difficult.²⁸

The move gave *Country Roads* the opportunity to have more of a presence with its readers. "Magazines continue to multiply by dividing readers into ever-narrowing niche markets."²⁹ However, the move threatened the relationship between the magazine and its St. Francisville readers. "Well, I guess the first threat was that we would lose the base in St. Francisville. It hasn't happened so much. We've lost a few, but for the most part, it's the same. The economic situation was different that year also."³⁰

Another significant threat for the magazine was the possibility of the magazine failing to distinguish itself in such a saturated market. "Ulrich International Periodical Directory contains

over 150,000 magazines, journals and newsletters from around the world.”³¹ According to *The Gale Database of Publications and Broadcast Media*, there are more than 24,000 general and special interest periodicals and newspapers published in the U.S. and Canada annually.³² Nearly 4,000 of those publications are domestic and international consumer magazines.³³ After the move, the magazine continued to compete not only with Baton Rouge publications, but any other advertising media that might take away advertising dollars.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the “action” required in order for the campaign to be effective can be summarized in one sentence. A proactive, long-term campaign was needed to inform *Country Roads* advertisers of the move, increase the magazine’s visual presence in Baton Rouge (the center of its distribution) and gain acceptance as a viable Baton Rouge magazine without losing the aesthetic foundation it was built on. “The move allowed us to be so much more of a part of the business community and to have visual presence.”³⁴

Two types of “communication” were used to disseminate the message. The controlled forms of communication were efforts that came directly from the *Country Roads* staff. These included a change to the masthead in the June 2002 issue and a write up in the reflections section of the July issue.³⁵ A postcard was sent to each advertiser and subscribed reader in June with a picture of the staff at the new location.

There was also an update to the website location information. Below is an excerpt from the “How to Reach Us” section on the webpage:

Country Roads magazine is meticulously crafted by talented, dedicated professionals with very good posture in our new digs—an architecturally intriguing house-cum-office in downtown Baton Rouge, Louisiana...although our trips to the venerable Magnolia Café in St. Francisville...have obviously been cut

to a minimum, we are happy to report that one of our number is holding up that end of the operation from her new office directly behind said Magnolia.³⁶

The major elements of the “persuasive communication” campaign are decidedly non-verbal. The first communication was the actual move to downtown Baton Rouge. The underlying message was that the magazine is a part of the downtown culture. The second part was the assurance to readers that this move would not affect content in a negative way. In the 20th anniversary issue, Fox-Smith reminded readers that “...although we’ve grown and our offices are in downtown Baton Rouge...we still seem to be ‘that little magazine’ for many of our readers...and whatever else might have changed, you can be sure that this magazine will always strive to present the best that this region has to offer, whichever byway it might lie along.”³⁷

Uncontrolled communications are forms that are not directly disseminated from the client. One example is the write up in the Downtown newsletter in October of 2002. In the article, Ashley Fox-Smith expressed her excitement about the move and said that it made sense since the magazine is the cultural events guide. “Now, all ten staff members are under one roof in Beauregard Town, creatively turning out 30,000 issues a month to aid and encourage adventures and fun-seekers ‘from Natchez to New Orleans.’”³⁸ The magazine also has a weekly program on 89.3 FM called “*Country Roads* Weekend Adventures Close to Home.”³⁹

The final step in the RACE formula is the evaluation. One of the primary reasons for the move was the desire to be seen as a reputable publication that serves as the cultural events guide for the region. In order to accomplish this goal, the magazine needed to increase brand awareness across the state, but specifically in the Baton Rouge area because it is the focus of editorial content and distribution.

By moving the headquarters to Baton Rouge, the staff was able to have a more visual presence in the capital city. Less than one year after the move, the Downtown Development District approached the magazine to discuss the publication of a downtown magazine. The *Red Stick Renaissance* was introduced in June 2003 with a distribution of 50,000. The editorial content focused solely on the revitalization of the downtown area and advertising consisted of downtown merchants only. The success of the first issue encouraged *Country Roads* to produce the second edition in October of 2003. Plans are underway to make the *Red Stick* a quarterly publication.

Though the magazine considers developments such as the *Red Stick Renaissance* to be positive indicators of the success of the move, no real evaluation has been put in place to measure the extent to which the decision has influenced the buying intentions of its consumers: the advertisers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, the researcher hoped to modify and test the Country-of-Origin Effects (COO) on a smaller scale by examining City-of-Origin effects. Using the theory qualitatively, the concept was used to examine whether the city in which the magazine is published is an important criteria to advertisers when making the decision to buy or continue advertising with the magazine.

Second, the researcher examined the degree to which different types of advertisers use COO. The following research questions were posed:

RQ1: What dimensions do Baton Rouge advertisers use when evaluating magazine brands?

RQ2: To what extent is COO an influence on the decision to buy advertising with a magazine?

Based on the researcher's review of the literature on the subjects of branding, country-of-origin effects and brand image, the hypotheses follow:

H1: City-of-Origin is a dimension used in the consideration of whether to buy or continue to buy advertising with the magazine.

H2: The more experience that an advertiser has with the magazine, the less influence COO has on the buyers' perception of the brand.

H3: The more experience that an advertiser has with the magazine, the less influence COO has on the buyers' intention to buy.

Ultimately, this study attempted to further establish Country-of-Origin Effects as a viable method of evaluating the relationship between COO, brand image and buying intentions. By using the model on a smaller scale, the study showed that there are stereotypes and stigmas not only from country-to-country but also from region-to-region and city-to-city. More importantly, the study benefits *Country Roads* professionally by enabling the staff to gain insight into the thoughts and feelings of its advertisers. The study also hopes to be beneficial to other publications that are considering repositioning themselves in their given markets.

1.3 End Notes

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- ³⁷ Fox-Smith, James. "Reflections" Country Roads July. 2002 volume 19 number 6:5
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CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“He who loves practice without theory is like a sailor who boards a ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast” Leonardo De Vinci¹

One of the strengths of *Country Roads* magazine is a strong brand image. However, when considering how to strategically position the magazine as a Baton Rouge publication, the staff considered changing not only the location of its headquarters, but the name as well in an effort to get away from the “country” connotations associated with the publication. Ashley Fox-Smith, associate publishers, said that the possibility of changing the name of the magazine did arise, but soon they realized that, with such brand loyalty, it would be more of a set back than a benefit.²

The magazine kept its original name; however the need to become a part of the Baton Rouge community persisted. “People like *The Baton Rouge Business Report* and other publications used to put out an annual report on area publications and these tiny little, 16-page magazines were on there and this was when we were printing 100-112 pages each issue and they weren’t listing us even though just our Baton Rouge based advertisers would have been 3-5 times that of these other publications... The perception was that we were not a ‘Baton Rouge’ publication.”³

With such a strong product reputation and brand image, the magazine staff believed that it was necessary to reinforce these assets by associating the publication with the “positive” attribute of being closer to the center of its editorial and distribution segment while separating the brand from the “negative” images of it being inferior, small-time and country. “We might be able to raise the perception of brand awareness with *Country Roads* through being here [Baton Rouge] because if we can have everybody in Baton Rouge knowing what *Country Roads* is and what it offers...It doesn’t even matter if not everyone is reading it.”⁴

The decision to move was made based on two assumptions. The first assumption was that it would make the creative and editorial processes easier. The editorial, sales and marketing departments would now be under one roof thus eliminating the hassle of trying to convey the layout of a particular ad over the phone or via fax. Members of the sales team could just walk upstairs to the graphics department and discuss it face-to-face.

The second assumption was that the magazine would now be considered a part of the Baton Rouge community. As such, information about local events, special projects, etc. would be much more accessible. Also, the sales team could now assure potential advertisers that the money spent with the magazine would be spent locally, in their community. “The fact that the magazine was closely associated with St. Francisville before was a very good thing because it was reminiscent of an easier more simplified time and something that a lot of people aspire to. The flip side is that *InRegister* could go to our advertisers and say ‘Country is what you get when you get *Country Roads!*’”⁵

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether the catalyst for the latter assumption, the importance of the headquarters location, is a true assumption. If it is, is it true for every advertiser? The Country-of-Origin Effect (COO) examined consumers’ relationship between brand image and country image when evaluating the quality of a product or service. For the purposes of this study, the concept will be modified to examine the *city-of-origin* effect. Before examining the theoretical framework of this concept, an understanding of the difference between brand image and country image is essential.

2.1 Brand Image

Consumer brand knowledge research can be traced back to the 1950s. According to Kevin L. Keller, the term refers to the way consumers think about a brand and how they react to

stimuli about the brand.⁶ H. Uggla defines brand identity as the images and signals a company sends out to its consumers. Brand image, on the other hand, is “the picture of the company that actually arises in the mind of the customer.”⁷

In 1960, the American Marketing Association (AMA) defined brand as: “A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.”⁸ For years, the AMA definition was described as being too “product-oriented.” In 1988, P.D. Bennett developed the following variation: “A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.”⁹ By including the term “any other feature,” Bennett allowed intangibles such as the product’s image to be considered in the attempt to distinguish the brand from others.¹⁰ A more consumer-related approach was taken by T. Amber in 1992. He asserted that brands are “...the promise of the bundles of attributes that someone buys and provide satisfaction...The attributes that make up a brand may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible.”¹¹

Brands convey both economic and symbolic advantages to the buyer. “To the consumer, a brand identifies the source of the product, which in turn assigns legal responsibility to the product maker, and provides a promise or bond with the maker of the product.”¹² Brands are also used as quick references for consumers. They immediately convey messages about product performance, familiarity and credibility. Lim and O’Cass assert that brands should be considered valuable corporate assets, and as such, should be managed for the short and long term.¹³

There are two philosophical approaches to branding. The first is that a brand is an addition to the product and acts as an “identifier” for the consumer. In this approach, branding is one of the last steps in product development. The second approach is the holistic perspective in

which the focus is the brand itself. “Using the marketing mix, the brand is tailored to the needs and wants of a specified target group. The elements of the marketing mix are unified by the brand such that the individual elements of the mix, are managed in a way which supports the brand message.”¹⁴

In the latter approach, brand image is tailored toward the needs and wants of the consumer. The acceptance of this image leads to brand strength/loyalty. From this acceptance and the degree of loyalty, managers can assess the brand’s value which can be used to determine future buying habits. According to P. Feldwick, brand image is the group of associations and beliefs a consumer has about a brand.¹⁵

2.2 Country Image

Country Image has been studied for nearly three decades. This research deals with how consumers’ perceptions of the image of a particular country affect their valuation of manufactured products. Kopler and Gertner define country image as “...the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places.”¹⁶

Several factors are important to the making of a country’s image. Geography, history, economy and reputation all play a part in whether a country is perceived to be positive or negative. Srikanthan and Gnoth state that consumers are inclined to believe that products produced in countries that are developed and that are perceived to produce high-quality products to be of higher quality than products produced in countries that are not known for high-quality product production.¹⁷

These images are nothing more than stereotypes. They may be inaccurate, outdated or unfounded; however, these perceptions are important parts of the consumer buying process. Kopler and Gertner assert that, because these perceptions become ingrained in consumers minds,

it is very difficult to change or adjust that prior knowledge. “People are more likely to pay attention to information that confirms their expectations.”

2.3 Country-of-Origin Effect

Believed to be one of the most influential elements that affect consumers’ decisions to buy products, Country-of-Origin Effects (COO) combines brand image with the image of the country in which a product is produced. Research on the concept makes up the largest segment research on international buying behavior. The theory has primarily been used in international marketing considerations. In 1985, Johansson established COO as “...the country where the corporate headquarters of the company marketing the product or brand is situated.”¹⁸ Lee and Schaninger described it as the “country of product design.”¹⁹

Papadopoulos defined COO as the “country-of-manufacture or assembly.”²⁰ He found that this aspect of a product influences consumers’ perceptions in two areas: perception of quality and perception of purchase value. Jaffe and Nebenzahl define COO as “the country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced.”²¹ Sauer defines country of origin as “the impact that generalizations and perceptions about a country have on a person’s evaluations of the country’s products and/or brands.”²²

There is a plethora of research concerning the COO effect and its importance in the marketing scheme. “Country of origin has become an integral part of the repertory of extrinsic cues to product evaluations, along with price, brand name, packaging and seller, as opposed to the study of the role of intrinsic qualities of the product such as materials, design, style, workmanship, colour and smell.”²³

There are two major tendencies in the previous research on COO. The first tendency is for respondents to regard products from their own country more favorably than those that are imported. The second tendency is for products from developed countries to be perceived more favorably than products from undeveloped and developing countries. “The reason for these perceptions have been largely attributed to economic, cultural and political systems of the source countries.”²⁴

Consumers’ perceptions of the country-of-origin influence overall attitudes about certain product attributes. These perceptions can be used to understand consumers’ evaluation of a product’s performance. “COO has a direct influence on product attributes, which in turn affect product evaluations, of products from a particular country.”²⁵

There are two components of the Country-of-Origin Effect. In the informational component, COO provides consumers with information concerning quality, dependability and value. The second component deals more with national identity and affiliation. These components influence buyers willingness to try a new product.

In 1988, Thorelli et al asserted that there is a relationship between perceived risk and a consumers evaluation of the product.²⁶ The level of risk associated with a product directly affects the customers willingness to purchase the product. Risks include uncertainty, potential adverse consequences, probability of loss, and cost of loss.

These risks are amplified when the buyer has very few or no intrinsic cues. Intrinsic cues are core product components such as ingredients, parts, etc. Extrinsic cues are not core components. These attributes are external to the product and include price, user imagery, brand personality and experience. Consumers use extrinsic cues to make buying decisions when intrinsic cues are not accessible.²⁷ These intangible cues, which are useful to consumers in

forming product evaluations, include guarantees, warranties, brand reputation, and perceptions of the country's image.

D.A. Schellinck conducted a study to test the importance of these extrinsic cues. Results of the study showed that COO appeared to have a stronger influence in terms of consumers' attitudes about the product. However, brand appeared to be more important in terms of purchase intentions. "It might be that COO causes a 'stereotype' effect in determining which country offers the best quality products. However, when it is time to purchase the product, the COO stereotype diminishes and consumers seek a more reliable way of assessing their alternatives, one that is provided by a well-known brand."²⁸

Kotler and Gertner hypothesize that these images are nothing more than stereotypes.²⁹ They may be inaccurate, outdated or even unfounded; however, these perceptions are important parts of the consumer buying thought process. The authors also assert that, when it comes to processing persuasive information, consumers are "sloppy cognitive processors."³⁰ They seek information that is in keeping with past experiences and beliefs, and they are hesitant to accept information that is contrary to earlier stereotypes or perceptions. "They prefer to adjust what they see to fit what they know. They may fill in information that is not presented or distort the reality to fit their mental representations."³¹ Because of this "sloppiness" stereotypes are often times perpetuated and are difficult to change.

C.M. Hans described country image as the "halo" effect. "When consumers are unfamiliar with a country's products, country image performs a halo construct, in which country image affects consumers' beliefs about product attributes, and these beliefs affect consumers' attitudes toward a brand."³² Hans also asserts that country image is more influential in "high

involvement” products such as wine, cigars and caviar and is less important in “low involvement” products such as t-shirts.³³

In 1989, Hans developed the first of two formulas that are used to examine the effects that the country-of-origin have on beliefs about product attributes which in turn affect brand attitude.³⁴ The first formula is the Halo Model of Country Image. Hans’ model works on the premise that “Made-In” Country Image (MCI) affects consumers beliefs about the attributes of the product. These beliefs in turn affect the consumers’ perception and attitude about the brand.

MCI => beliefs about attributes => brand attitude

MCI is the country on the “made-in” label.³⁵ Many perceive this to be the country where all production takes place. However, due to the increase of “hybrid products” this acronym takes on a new meaning. Hybrid products are those designed in one country, assembled in another, etc. This increase has caused market researchers to discover that Culture-of-Brand-Origin (COBO), rather than COO, is the major influence on buyers’ perceptions. For example, Country Roads magazine has several “made-in” labels. The articles are written by writers from all over the state. The layout of the magazine and the design of the ads take place in Baton Rouge. The magazine is printed in New Orleans.

For reasons such as this, Thakor and Kohli defined COBO as “...the place, region or country to which a brand is perceived to belong by its target consumers.” Samiee viewed COBO as the bias consumers have for or against a brand based on the COO associated with the product or service. “It is reasonable to infer that the influence or bias resulting from a country may be attached to a brand name over time, even though its products are no longer designed, manufactured or assembled in its country-of-origin.”

In 1994, Leclerc tested this idea by examining the effects of foreign branding on consumers' perceptions and attitudes about the product. The study found that when brand names were spelled or pronounced in a foreign language, consumers could readily identify the COBO. The results also indicated that the proportion of respondents who were able to correctly identify the COBO was greater than the proportion able to correctly identify COO. "The findings provide support to the proposition that the culture rather than the country, of the brand rather than the product, is used by consumers to extract extrinsic cues about the products they encounter in the marketplace."

The second formula is the Summary Model of Country Image. This construct assumes that individuals are influenced by experiences with products from the country and the attributes associated with those products more than the country-of-origin.

Experience => beliefs => MCI => brand attitude

Jaffe and Nebenzahl combined the two to create a unified model. This dynamic model describes the consumer evaluation process as one that shifts the level of importance of country image from a halo to a summary effect as product familiarity increases.

Due to the need to evaluate products while having limited information, consumers utilize their perceived country images to formulate brand attitudes. Having experience with products made in a country leads to a revision of that country image as a producer. For the sake of efficiency or need to evaluate new products, the revised country image is utilized by consumers to formulate attitudes toward these and other products or brands made in the country.³⁶

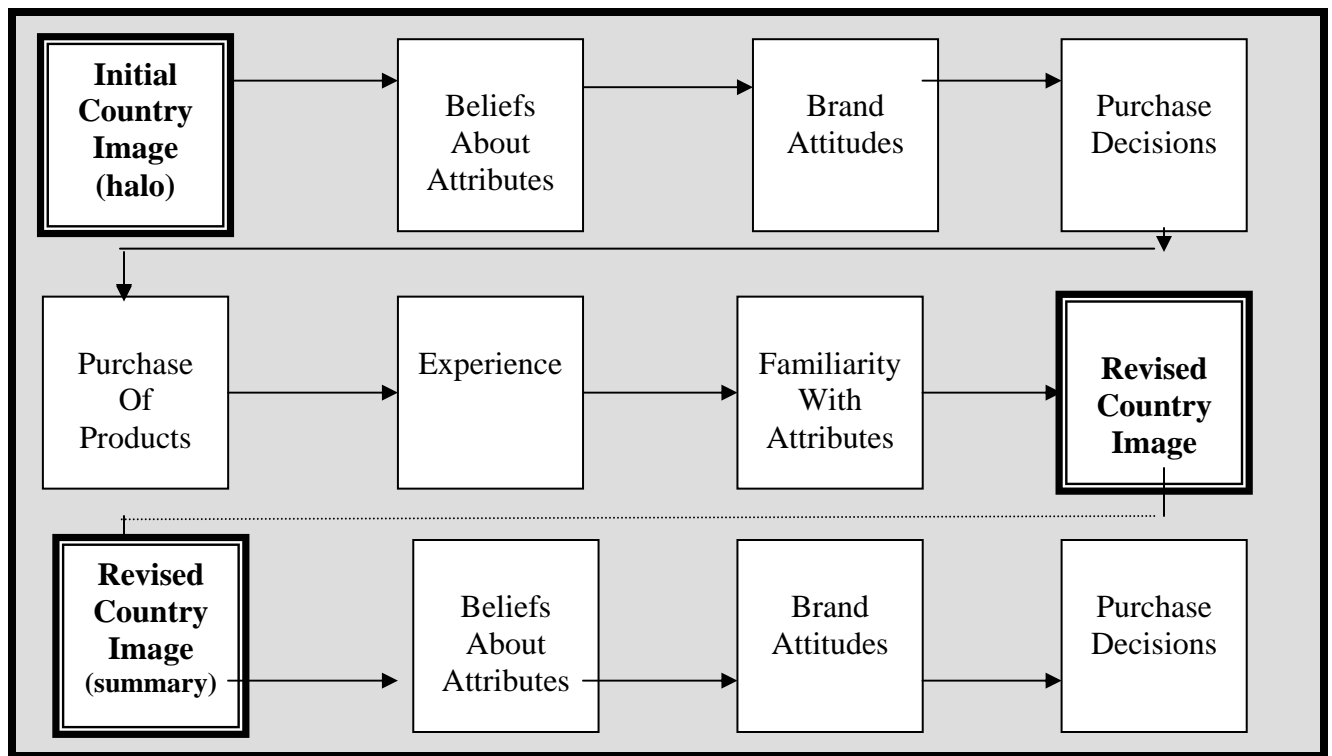


Figure 2.1 A Combined Halo and Summary Model of Country Image³⁷

One limitation of the COO effect is that not all consumers use it when evaluating products. Those who do use it (1) don't necessarily use it the same way as their peers or (2) don't use it the same way across different product categories. "Consumer expertise has also been found to be important: novices use COO when they evaluate a product, whereas experts only rely on COO stereotypes when they have no product attribute information, or only have ambiguous information."³⁸ For this reason, the researcher has chosen to use the combined model to qualitatively examine the types of advertisers who use COO as a deciding factor and how it is used in the decision making process.

2.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What dimensions do Baton Rouge advertisers use when evaluating magazine brands?

In a 2003 study, Aron O'Cass and Debra Grace used both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the brand dimensions most important to consumers' regarding branded services.³⁹ During the qualitative portion, both structured and unstructured interviews were

conducted. The unstructured interviews were conducted first and served to get respondents to talk about the general dimensions they attribute when evaluating service brands. The following dimensions were nominated during the interviews.

In the table below, column A represents the dimensions mentioned by the respondents as having some meaning, however small, on their buying decisions and product quality evaluations. Column B represents that dimensions the respondents designated as being “very important” to the formulation of brand images and attitudes. While the respondents in O’Cass and Grace’s study admitted that COO had some effect on their perception of certain brands and products, it was not extremely influential.

Table 2.1 Brand Dimensions of Service⁴⁰

Service Design and Features	A	B
Servicescape	X	X
Feelings	X	X
Brand name, trademark, etc.	X	
Brand Personality	X	
Brand and self-image	X	
Image of typical user	X	X
Price	X	
Experience with brand	X	X
Country-of-origin	X	
Brand advertising	X	
Word-of-mouth	X	X
Publicity	X	
Employees	X	X

From that list of general dimensions, structured questions were developed and used to interview more respondents. The structured interviews were conducted to verify that the dimensions offered in the first set of interviews were congruent with those of the participants in the unstructured interviews.

In this thesis, parts of the O’Cass and Grace’s techniques were modified and used to answer the first research question. The structured interviews conducted during this study evaluated whether O’Cass and Grace’s dimensions are relevant to Baton Rouge advertisers and whether the weight given to each dimension has shifted. For example, is more importance given to city-of-origin vs. experiences?

RQ2: To what extent is COO an influence on the decision to buy advertising with a magazine?

Han and Terpstra conducted a study in 1988 to see which was more important to consumers when making buying decisions, country-of-origin or brand.⁴¹ The study concluded that “the sourcing country has greater effect on consumer evaluation of product quality than does the brand name.”⁴² In 1996, H. Niss proposed that if the image of the country-of-origin is favorable to a company’s target consumers, then that country should be stressed in the advertising and marketing of the product.⁴³

The primary focus of this study is to see if the city-of-origin affects advertisers’ buying intentions. Has the move from St. Francisville, a perceived small-town city with a “country” atmosphere in keeping with the overall theme and scope of the magazine, to Baton Rouge, the bustling capital city, affected the advertisers’ perceptions of the product and brand? Jaffe and Nebenzahl’s Combined Hala and Summary Model, as shown earlier in this chapter, indicates that consumers shift the level of importance of COO based on the amount of intrinsic information available. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher asserted that, in instances such as this, when a product has a respected, high-quality reputation as *Country Roads* does, city-of-origin becomes less important than core product dimensions such as editorial content and circulation rates.

Qualitative interviews evaluated whether this shift in importance was in relation to the amount of experience the advertiser has had with the magazine. The results of this study are important to the magazine staff because it will give insight into the marketing messages and approaches that will be most effective. *Country Roads* will also have the opportunity to strengthen its brand image.

2.5 End Notes

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³ Fox-Smith, James and Dorcas Brown. Personal Interview. 30 June 2003. Tape recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

⁴ Fox-Smith, James and Dorcas Brown Interview

⁵ Fox-Smith, James and Dorcas Brown Interview

⁶ Lim, Kenny and Aron O'Cass. "Consumer brand classifications: an assessment of culture-of-origin versus country-of-origin." The Journal of Product and Brand Management 10 (2001): 120-136.

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⁹ Wood, Lisa. "Brands and brand equity: definition and management."

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- ²² Jaffe, Eugene D., and Israel D. Nebenzahl. National Image and Competitive Advantage.
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- ²⁴ Lim, Kenny and Aron O'Cass. "Consumer brand classifications: an assessment of culture-of-origin versus country-of-origin."
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³¹ Kotler, Phillip and David Gertner. "Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective."

³² Srikatanyoo, Natthawut and Juergen Gnoth. "Country image and international tertiary education."

³³ Srikatanyoo, Natthawut and Juergen Gnoth. "Country image and international tertiary education."

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³⁵ Jaffe, Eugene D., and Israel D. Nebenzahl. National Image and Competitive Advantage.

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⁴² Kerekes, Edit L. and Linda Tonvall. Two Countries, One Image: A Case study of Volvo cars in Sweden and in Hungary.

⁴³ Kerekes, Edit L. and Linda Tonvall. Two Countries, One Image: A Case study of Volvo cars in Sweden and in Hungary.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

“Measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not so.” – Galileo Gallilei¹

In the book titled *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Steinar Kvale asserts that qualitative research is an “attempt to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.”² One of the advantages of qualitative interviewing is that it allows the participants to describe what is most important to them when considering advertising with a regional publication. In doing so, the subject is able to use his or her own words rather than having to select from several answers predetermined by the interviewer.

Another advantage is that the interviews allow the researcher to probe for more details and to discover the whys and hows of a respondents’ feelings. Most importantly, the researcher is able to ensure that the subject fully understands and has correctly interpreted the interview questions. The disadvantage of the qualitative interviews is that analyzing and interpreting the data are more time consuming than analyzing and interpreting quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires.

Although many have considered qualitative methods to be unscientific and unreliable, researchers now realize that there is a need to be able to predict consumer behavior. This consequently creates a need for a structured method of collecting in-depth and detailed information.³ According to Kvale, there are seven stages in the qualitative research interview process: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, interpreting, verifying and reporting. These steps and their significance to this particular study are outlined below.⁴

3.1 Thematizing

In the thematizing stage, the researcher developed the major themes of the study. What questions would be asked? Why were they important? “Thematizing refers to a conceptual clarification and a theoretical analysis of the theme investigated, and the formulations of research questions.”⁵ Much of this process can be seen in chapter one of this study, while the themes of the study are outlined in the research questions.

3.2 Designing

The overall design of the study is determined in the second stage. Every step of the process, from interviewing to reporting, is organized. The reason for this is to ensure that the study is well coordinated and to avoid unexpected obstacles in the final steps of the project. The methodology is determined and shaped to effectively fit the theme of the study and to make sure that the research questions are adequately answered. Based on the needs of this study, the researcher decided to conduct fourteen controlled telephone interviews. The first seven interviews were conducted with Baton Rouge advertisers who were with the magazine consistently before, during and after the move. The second set of interviews were conducted with advertisers who began advertising after the move.

Each interview question served two purposes. First, it was relevant to and instrumental in enhancing the theme of the study. Questions were determined by their relationship to the theoretical concept of Country-of-Origin Effects and to their ability to be both analyzed and generalized. Second, the question promoted dynamic and effective interaction between the researcher and the participant. To ensure this, questions were short, straight-forward and easy to understand.

There are three types of qualitative interviews: the informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. In all cases, participants responses are open-ended. This study utilized standardized open-ended approach.

The standardized open-ended approach is the not most widely used format. However, it is the most efficient qualitative method for this type of study. In this approach, the researcher developed a predetermined list of questions and used the list to ensure that all necessary topics and issues were covered. The interviewer adhered strictly to this list without varying in wording or order. The reason for this was to reduce interviewer bias and to be able to compare the responses of different respondents. All responses were open-ended; however, one drawback was that there was no flexibility to respond to unexpected issues or concerns that came up during the interviews.

Participants were selected from a list of Baton Rouge advertisers in the December, January and February issues of the magazine. The reason participants were selected from three different issues was because some advertisers have non-consecutive contracts, so to avoid missing some advertisers who may have skipped one or two of the months, it was necessary to use a combined list. To prevent bias, every third name on the list was selected and contacted. After determining that the advertiser was interested in participating, the researcher asked several screening questions to determine which category the advertisers should be placed in. There were two categories: the loyalists (advertisers who have been with the magazine consistently before, during and after the move) and newcomers (advertisers who started advertising after the move). When the advertisers agreed to participate, the researcher scheduled the time, date and location of the interview. The process continued until all fourteen spots were filled.

Each participant was asked to sign a consent form that outlined the purpose of the study and conveyed any possible risks associated with participation in the study. The form explained the participants' right to withdraw involvement from the study at any time. The form also assured them that all private data identifying them would not be reported

3.3 Interviewing

Stage three was when the actual interviewing took place. Participants were briefed before beginning the interview. During the briefing, the interviewer defined the purpose of the interview and the scope of the study. The participants were reminded that the interview would be recorded and that they would have an opportunity to ask any questions before starting the interview.

After each interview was completed, the participants were debriefed. The debriefing allowed the interviewer to reaffirm the purpose of the study and the promise that the information would be used in the manner agreed upon. The main points of the interview were recapped to confirm that the information was captured accurately. The interviewee was given another final opportunity to voice any questions or concerns.

Each interview was tape recorded for two reasons. The first was to ensure that the information would be gathered correctly. Second, it gave the researcher the opportunity to concentrate on the discussion and on the dynamics of the interview. Things like pauses, laughter and change in tone were duly noted without concern that the interviewee's expressions would be overlooked or lost.

3.4 Transcribing

After the interviews were conducted, the researcher moved to the next step and transcribed the tape recordings into written text. Each one hour interview will take 2-3 hours to transcribe and will yield 4-9 pages of text. There were 62 total pages of transcription.

3.5 Analyzing

During the analysis stage, the transcribed interviews were interpreted by the researcher. According to Kvale, five approaches to the “analysis of meaning” stage are used to examine the subjects’ perspectives as they pertain to the theme of the study: condensation, categorization, narrative structuring, interpretation, and ad hoc methods.⁶ Condensation is the approach in which participants’ responses are shortened to find the main point of each statement. In essence, the responses are paraphrased to provide a succinct picture of the research data.

Categorization is the coding process of the interview. Statements are divided into categories such as “positive” vs “negative”, “+” or “-“, or “1-5”. These categories are used to indicate occurrences of a phenomenon, the strength of a phenomenon, etc. They also allow the results of the interview to be reduced to tables and figures. The categories for this study were determined from a combination of the needs of the theory and the direction of the results.

Narrative structuring is the type of analysis used in chapters one and two of this study. It focuses more on the stories told during the interview and sometimes helps set the scene or serves as a backdrop for a study. In the interpretation approach, the interviewer goes beyond what is actually said in the interviews and examines the deeper thoughts, feelings and meanings expressed by the interviewee. Finally, the ad hoc method is an open-ended approach that uses a variety of approaches based on the specific needs of the study. The results are communicated in text, numbers, figures or charts depending on the direction of the study.

This study used a combination of the narrative structuring, categorization, and interpretation approaches. As stated earlier, the narrative analyses was used to flesh out the introduction and explain the reasons for choosing the COO concept. The data collected from each interview was categorized then examined to find the meaning of the answers with respect to

the categories being used. After the categorization process, the responses were interpreted to find the deeper meanings.

3.6 Verification

After the transcripts were analyzed and the data were categorized and interpreted, the researcher examined the validity of the study. The researcher also examined the consistency of the results and the reliability of the information gathered. Did the study appropriately answer the research questions?

The number of interviews was chosen based on the researcher's attempt to get a representative sample and based on the resources available. In 2003, the average monthly issue contained more than 180 advertisers. Of those advertisers, more than 70 of them were from the Greater Baton Rouge area. Based on that number, fourteen interviews are equivalent to a nearly twenty percent representation of the Baton Rouge area monthly advertisers.

3.7 Reporting

These interviews were used to understand what the move meant to advertisers. In the final stage of the qualitative interview process, the researcher combined the data into a comprehensive report (the thesis). Through the results of this study, the researcher attempted to increase the understanding of how a regional publication handles its image communication in targeting a different culture and how advertisers in that culture experience the publication's approach.

3.8 End Notes

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⁶ Kvale, Steinar. InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Open-ended interviews allowed the participants to freely discuss the issues they felt were most important in terms of finding a quality magazine to advertise in. The questions also allowed the respondents to communicate things that were not actually asked. For example, many of the respondents chose to discuss which competing area publications they are currently advertising in. These responses offered insight into the things the advertisers liked and disliked about these publications. With this information, the researcher gained a more detailed picture of the advertisers' ways of looking at advertising in general.

In order to analyze the responses, the answers to the interview questions were categorized. This method worked well because it allowed the researcher to organize the interviews in a way that made it easier to summarize the 62 pages of dialogue. The process also made it possible to manipulate the data into groups which were used to test the three hypotheses, and the method allowed this qualitative data to be quantified in an attempt to make comparisons between the interviews.

4.1. Demographics

Respondents represented ten different product/service types. There were 2 restaurants, 2 shoe stores, 2 jewelry stores, 2 antique stores, 1 gift/accents shop, 1 spiritual/wellness store, 1 furniture store, 1 clothing store, 1 salon/spa and 1 senior living community. Seven of the interviews were conducted with the "loyalists." These were business owners who have advertised with *Country Roads* on a somewhat consistent basis before, during and after the move. In this group, the number of years each business had advertised with the magazine ranged from 3-8. The average number of years of advertising was 5.14.

The remaining seven interviews were conducted with the “newcomers.” These business owners have just been advertising with the magazine since the location of the main office has changed. The amount of time each participant in this group had been advertising with *Country Roads* ranged from 6 months to 2 years. The average time period of advertising for this group was 11.42 months. Overall, the newest business to *Country Roads* had 6 months of experience with the magazine while the oldest had 8 years.

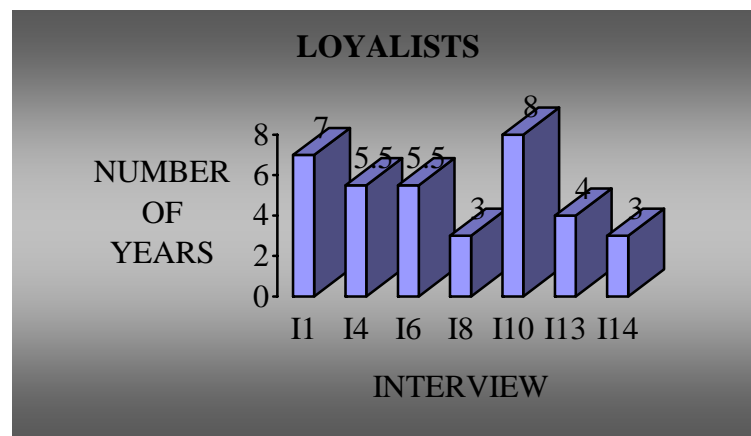


Figure 4.1 Loyalists' Time Spent Advertising in Country Roads

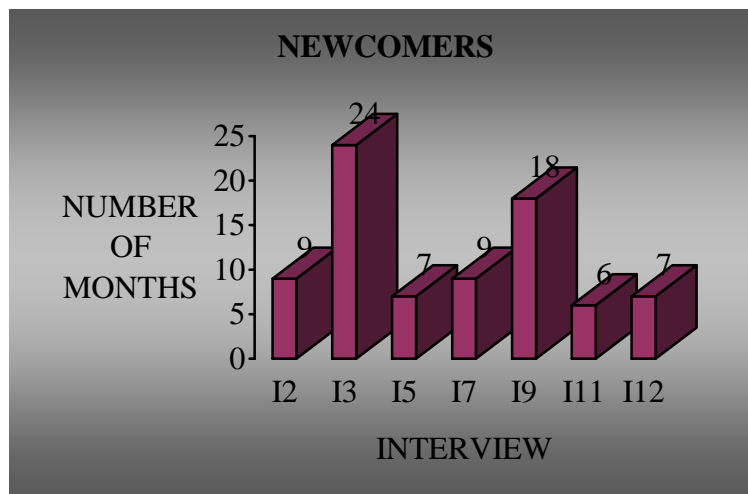


Figure 4.2 Newcomers' Time Spent Advertising in Country Roads

The average frequency of advertising for the loyalist group was 8.28 times per year. The average of the newcomer group was 10.71 times. For 2004, the loyalist group projected that they would only advertise an average of 7.57 times annually while the newcomers' average increased to 11.14 times. Although the newcomers had less experience with the magazine, they tended to advertise more consistently. This could be attributed to the fact that the loyalists expressed that they did not isolate their advertising dollars only to *Country Roads*. Many of the participants mentioned two to three additional publications as well as television, radio and the newspaper as parts of their marketing formulas.

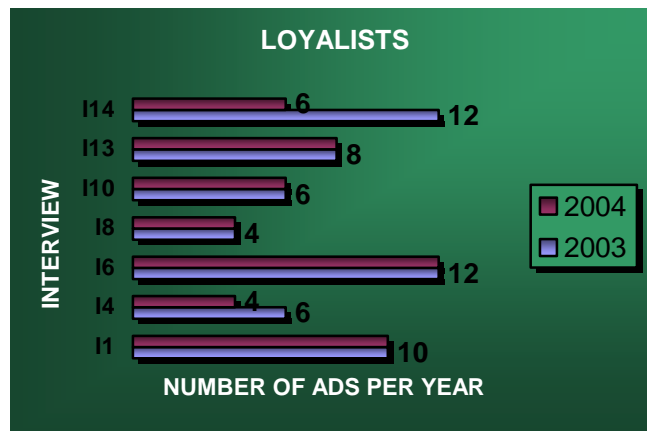


Figure 4.3 Loyalists' Annual Frequency of Advertising

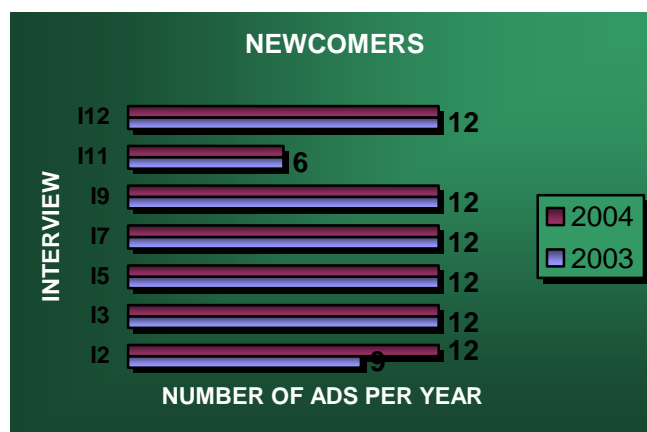


Figure 4.4 Newcomers' Annual Frequency of Advertising

4.2 Answers to Research Questions

Based on the review of literature and the needs of the study, the responses from each of the fourteen interviews were broken into two groups to answer the underlying research questions. The first research question was: What dimensions do Baton Rouge advertisers use when evaluating magazine brands? The interview questions that helped answer this question follow.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazine to advertise in?

After being asked several questions that would help the researcher organize the interviews demographically, the respondents were asked to list the elements that were used in making their decisions to advertise with magazine. Below is a list of the factors that were mentioned throughout the fourteen interviews. The most frequently mentioned factor was the “type of reader.”

Table 4.1 Interviewees’ Responses for Influential Factors

Dimensions	Times Mentioned Total
Type of Reader	9
Cost of Ad	5
Number of Copies Actually Read	5
Distribution Location	3
Geographic Coverage (Circulation)	2
Cost of the Magazine for Readers	2
Article Content	1
Color vs. Black & White	1
Number of Times Published Per Year	1
Number of Years Established	1
Customer Response to Particular Ad	1
Customer Service	1
Reputation of the Magazine	1

The figure below breaks down the factors mentioned based on the type of advertiser. For example, in both categories, the type of reader was the factor mentioned most frequently by the

entire group. However, practical things like cost, circulation and number of copies actually read seemed important to loyalists while newcomers mentioned customer service, years of establishment, and reputation.

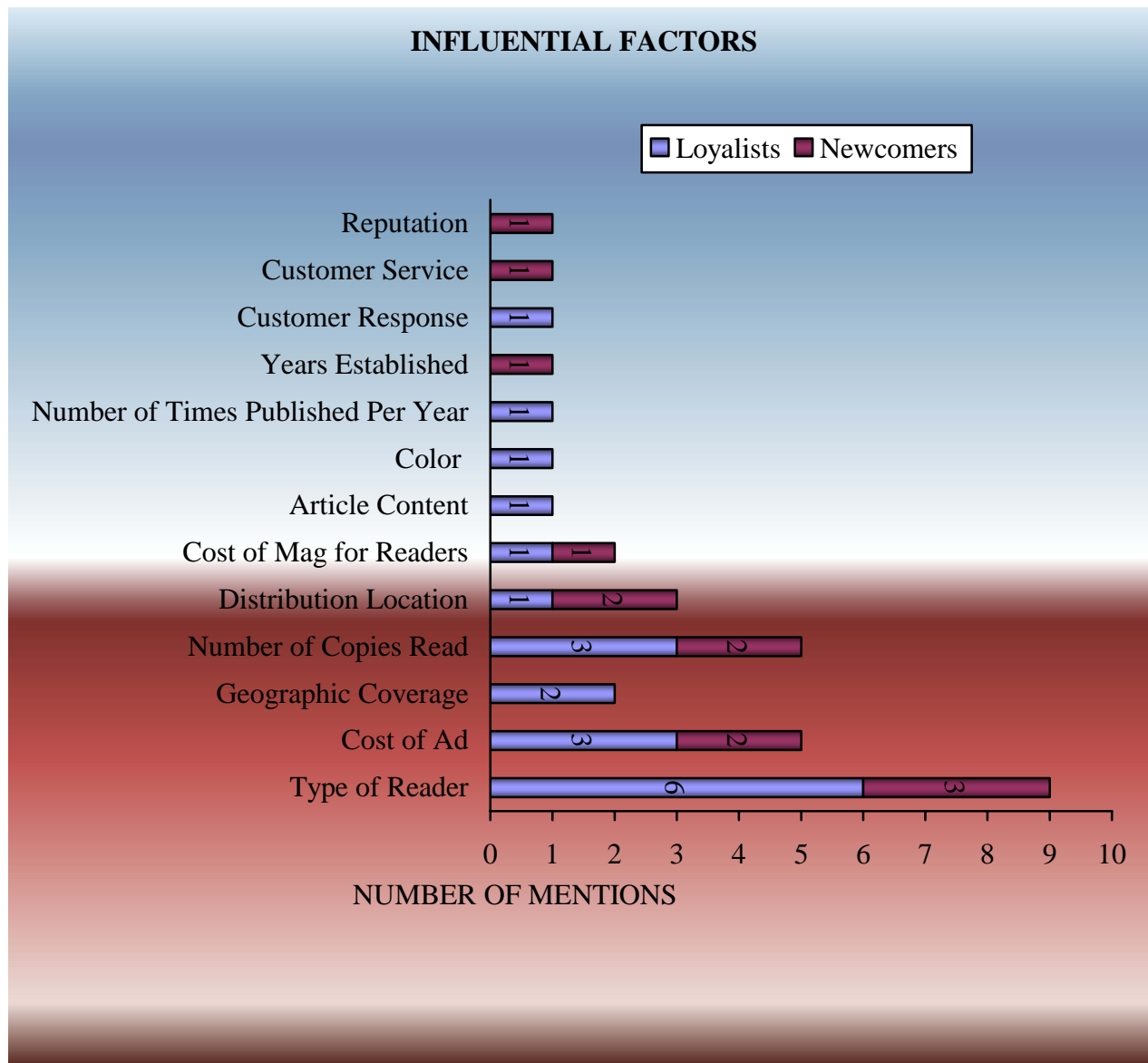


Figure 4.5 Most Important Factors to the Advertisers.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

The factor most frequently mentioned as being the “most important” or most influential element in their decision-making process was the type of reader. For example, one newcomer indicated that, “...the thing about that with *Country Roads* is that it’s a little more adult oriented, you know. So a lot of, like, moms read it and then they bring their daughters in to buy like prom dresses and things like that.”¹ A loyalist said, “...[We] wanted to be in a publication that was well read by the people [we] were targeting...and still are targeting.”² Newcomers most frequently mentioned type of reader, but loyalists evenly weighed the type of reader with the cost of the ad.

Table 4.2 Respondents Most Important Factors

Most Important Factors	Times Mentioned Total
Type of Reader	5
Cost of Ad	4
Geographic Coverage	1
Layout of the Magazine	1
Article Content	1
Value	1
Number of Times Published Per Year	1
Customer Response to Particular Ad	1
Customer Service	1
Reputation of the Magazine	1

**Some advertisers mentioned more than one “most important” factor.

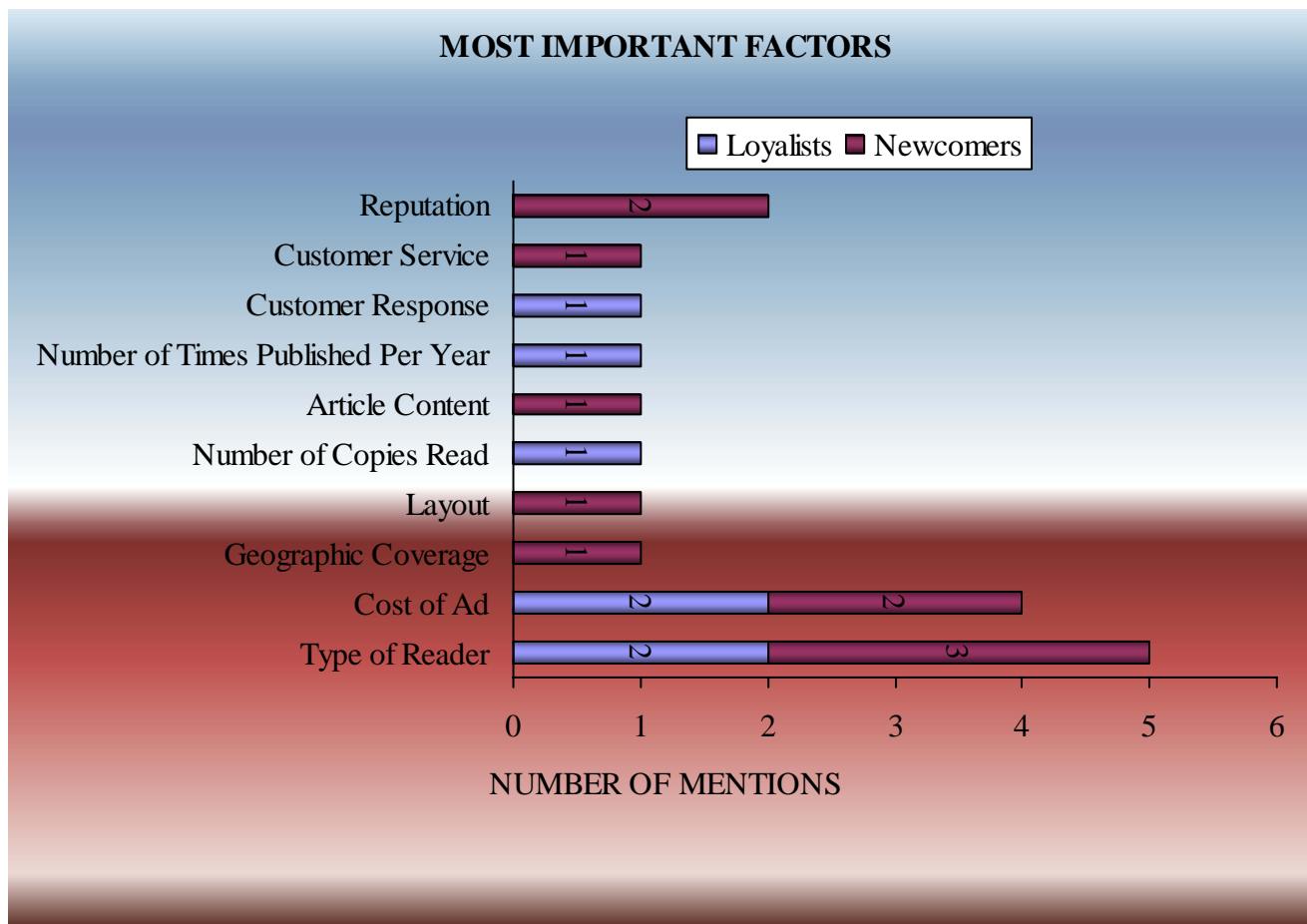


Figure 4.6 Participants' Most Important Factors

What factor was least important? Why?

Although in the previous question four participants considered “cost of the ad” to be the most important factor, six other respondents thought the cost was the least important thing. One loyalist said, “I really didn’t care about the cost as long as it reached my audience.”³ Another loyalist agreed, “I mean, don’t get me wrong. I didn’t want to pay a million bucks for an ad, but the reputation of the overall magazine was more important.”⁴

Table 4.3 Respondents' Least Important Factors

Least Important Factors	Times Mentioned Total
Cost of Ad	6
Color vs. Black & White	2
Layout of the Magazine	1
Glossy Paper	1

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

When asked who designs the ads, *Country Roads* or an advertising agency, nine of the fourteen said that they design the ads in conjunction with the *Country Roads* staff. Two said that they use an advertising agency more times than not, and the final two said that they toggle between using an agency and using the staff at *Country Roads*.

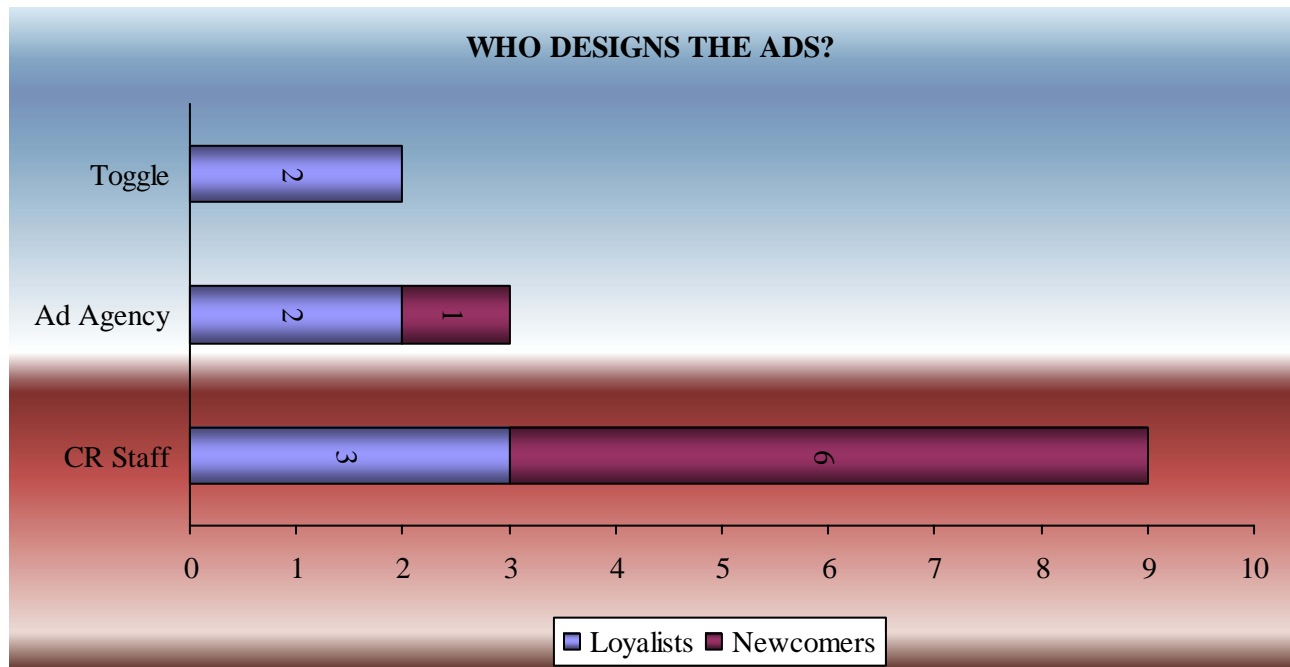


Figure 4.7 Breakdown of Those Who Designed Ads versus Use Agencies

If you hire an advertising agency, do they determine which publications you advertise in?

Of the four advertisers who use an advertising agency, two specified that they only deal with a graphic designer to produce the ads. The agency does not perform the other traditional duties associated with advertising agencies such as helping the advertiser create an advertising budget, recommending a successful marketing formula, or coordinating media buys. The two remaining advertisers do use advertising agencies in the traditional capacity.

One interviewer, who uses a traditional agency, said that his agency has some input but very little influence at all on which magazines he chooses to advertise in. Another participant

admitted that his graphic designer doesn't even attempt to influence his decisions. "He doesn't try to get into who I choose to advertise with. He just makes the ads."⁵

The other two advertisers said that the agencies they employee have a large influence on their choice of magazines. One advertiser said, "...when I started thinking about advertising with *Country Roads*, I asked our graphic designer what her experience was working with them, and that actually helped me feel better about giving them a chance."⁶ The other advertiser said, "He's the one who helps us decide how to best use our advertising dollars. That's his main reason for working with us. He makes the process effortless for us."⁷

How large is your advertising budget?

The next question addressed the advertisers' annual advertising budget. When asked how large his/her budget was, participants typically responded one of three ways: 1) they gave a rough numerical estimate, 2) they did not give a specific dollar amount, but indicated the other forms of media they are advertising in, or 3) they did not offer specifics. The advertisers who offered dollar estimates spent anywhere from \$3,000 to \$20,000 annually.

Table 4.4 Other Forms of Media Used

Other Forms of Media	Times Mentioned Total
<i>Magazines</i>	
InRegister	5
Other (including non-specified)	3
South Baton Rouge Journal	2
City Social	2
Town Favorites	1
<i>Radio</i>	2
<i>Television</i>	2
<i>Newspaper</i>	
The Advocate	3
The Reveille	3
Tiger Weekly	2
<i>Non-Specific</i>	6

What image do you connect to the price of the ads?

After discussing the sizes of their advertising budgets, participants were asked what images they connected to the advertising rates. Ten of the participants said that the price was comparable to what other magazines in the area are charging. One advertiser said, "...it's fairly competitive. I also advertise in *InRegister* and even the LSU newspapers, so the price range of the size that I purchase is pretty much competitive...it's about the same price as other magazines, so it really isn't any cheaper, and it doesn't make the magazine any cheaper or high end because it's pretty much the same price around town."⁸

The other four advertisers thought the advertising rates were fairly inexpensive. According to one participant, "It's moderately under two of the other publications, so it is one of the lower priced advertising rates, but compared to what you're getting with *Country Roads* and the way *Country Roads* is received, it's a very good price for the ad."⁹ Another respondent said, "Well...I think, considering the good work they do, the price is very reasonable. Really. I get so much exposure that I don't think twice about writing the check every month."¹⁰

How did you hear about Country Roads magazine?

A large number of the participants knew about the magazine because they were regular readers before beginning to advertise. One advertiser remembers, "I used to read it all the time. Let's say I would go into a coffee shop. If I would sit and drink coffee, I would definitely pull it and bring it with me, so I had issues at home that, when I was ready to advertise, I just looked up and called."¹¹ Another advertiser said, "I've lived in Baton Rouge all my life, and I've always loved to pick up the magazine whenever I saw it around town. Naturally, when I opened my business, I thought of it first."¹²

Another group of advertisers said they just happened to look through the magazine. “I just picked up several magazines in the area and flipped through them. I liked the feel of *Country Roads*, so I decided to go with them.”¹³ The other two participants credited a *Country Roads* salesperson with introducing them to the magazine.

My salesperson called on me several times and...she was aggressive in that she was very attentive, but she wasn't obnoxious...I had a lady from *South Baton Rouge Journal*, and she was obnoxious. She was telling me who my customer was and I didn't appreciate that, and she was selling the virtues of her magazine whereas [the *Country Roads* salesperson] didn't. She just said, ‘This is what we can do for you, and this is how much is costs, and we will work with you’...and they have.¹⁴

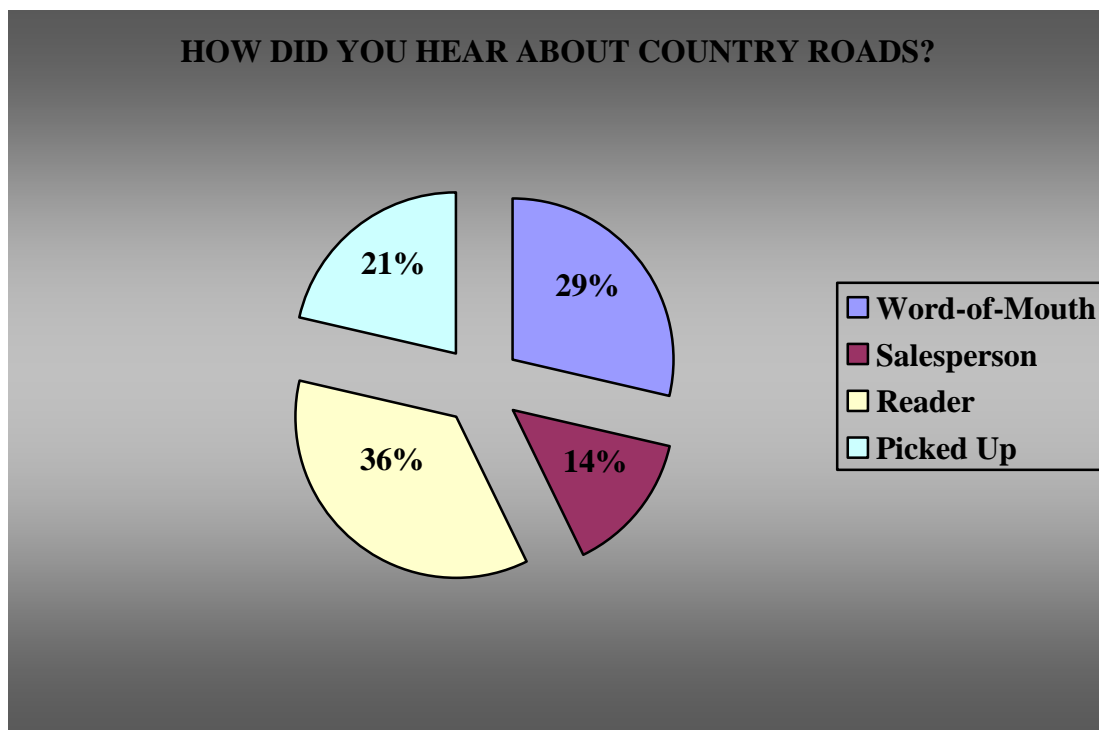


Figure 4.8 Ways Advertisers Were Introduced to the Magazine.

Who is your target audience? Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you aim to reach?

In a continuing effort to learn more about the advertisers' thought processes, the participants were asked to describe their target audiences. The responses varied and were many times dependent on the type of product each advertiser sold. Despite these differences, the advertisers largely agreed that they were successful in reaching their target audiences. For example, one advertiser said, "As a matter of fact, I've had people cut ads out that I put in *Country Roads* and bring it to me and say, 'Oh, this is what I want. This is the shoe.' Or they'll say, 'I saw your ad. How much is it?' So yeah, it does work."¹⁵

All except one of the participants believed that by advertising in *Country Roads*, they were reaching their target audiences. The one advertiser who was not completely confident that he was reaching his audience admitted that he has been re-shifting his advertising dollars. "I think that with *Country Roads*, I probably miss a lot of people just because they don't read it every month."¹⁶

What kind of people read *Country Roads*?

The respondents were asked if they could describe the typical *Country Roads* reader. Their descriptions varied slightly; however, 50% of the time, the target audiences of both the magazine and the advertiser correlated. In the table below, the left column indicates the target audience of the business while the right column indicates the typical *Country Roads* reader. In the "Interview Number" column, those numbers with an asterisk beside them indicate that the target audiences of both the magazine and the advertiser are very similar or the same.

Table 4.5 Advertisers' Target Audience vs. *Country Roads*' Target Audience

Interview Number	Advertiser's Target Audience	Typical Country Roads Reader
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to Baton Rouge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper-middle class
*2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affluent age group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White women, 25-47
*3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, college age to 40s; medium/ high income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, college age to forties; medium to high income
*4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle to Upper-middle class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as his target audience; information seeking
*5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one type of person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one type of person
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one type of person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females; mid-20s-mid-50s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same demographic as newspaper
*8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female; 18-50s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as target audience
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females; 18-35 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Women
*10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper-middle class females with disposable income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as target audience
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females; 28 to 50; middle to upper-middle class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in outlying areas; different than target audience
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one type of person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females; mid-20s to 60+
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women; mid-20s to mid-40s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one type of person
*14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • middle to upper-middle class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as target audience

While answering this question, the one respondent who was not entirely certain that he was reaching his target audience justified his doubts by stating that he believed the demographics of *Country Roads* were the same as those of the local newspaper. "It's a great publication. I just think I can reach...I think the people that read *Country Roads* probably also read the newspaper, so I feel like I can fit them and other people in the newspaper as opposed to just getting a selected few in *Country Roads*."¹⁷

What image do you want to communicate to your customers? Do you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Just as the target audience for each advertiser was dependent on the product or service offered, so was the image that each advertiser wanted to portray. All of the advertisers agreed that they are successfully communicating their desired images. An example is the following excerpt from one of the interviews.

“I ask people, ‘How did you hear about us?’ and when they say they saw an ad, 9 times out of 10 it was *Country Roads* and my customers come in and comment on the ads you know like, ‘Oh I really like the ad this month! I can’t wait to see the next ad.’ So that tells me they are being seen. The other publications, I didn’t hear anything or I heard less so that’s why I stopped. When that contract ended, I didn’t renew...”¹⁸

What image do you think *Country Roads* wants you to have about the magazine?

When asked what image they thought *Country Roads* was trying to communicate to them, the participants responses generally fell into one of four categories. Three of the participants said that the magazine wants to stress that it has good customer service. For example, one respondent said, “They are more informative than any other magazine, and they have great customer service. I remember when we first started, we advertised with *InRegister*, and they misspelled jewelry!!! That’s like the most important word [in our ads]!”¹⁹

Another customer said, “They want you to be happy. They call, they do a follow-up about your ads, what things you want to change, what things you didn’t like, etc. So they are...and they’re community based and they’re in the area, so I mean, to me it’s a hard-working company that provides a good service and keeps their advertising rates at their lowest for their customers and tries to build a good working relationship.”²⁰

Many of the remaining respondents expressed that the magazine is informative. “It’s not a social magazine, so it’s good because it has a little bit of everything. There’s good articles to read about things that happen around town. I think the name says it. *Country Roads*. It just shows you about Louisiana and all of its little corners.”²¹

The remaining participants were split between thinking that the magazine was progressive and thinking that it had a “down-home” feel to it. One of the two respondents believing that the magazine is progressive said, “...they haven’t been stagnant. They haven’t just stayed in the St. Francisville area. They are always trying to increase their area...the scope of their magazine is always increasing.”²²

On the other hand, one advertiser said, “They want me in their magazine which represents, just by the name *Country Roads*, more down-home, more down-to-earth...it’s for me, more of an older feel to it.”²³

What characteristics do you think *Country Roads* should emphasize in its marketing?

The diagram below indicates the things that the advertisers saw as strengths of the magazine and as such should be promoted more often.

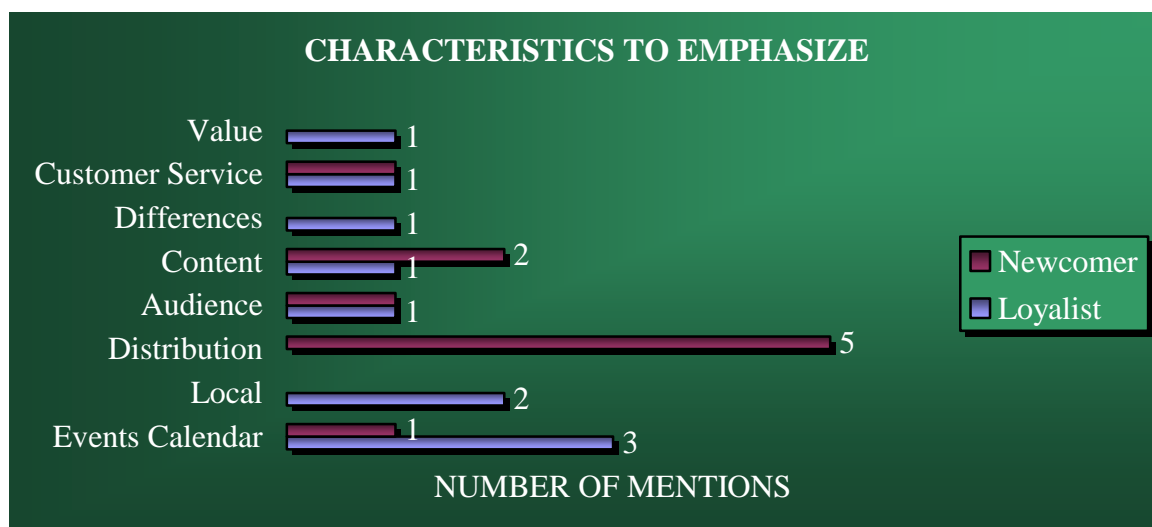


Figure 4.9 Characteristics *Country Roads* Should Emphasize

If you compared *Country Roads* to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

When asked to compare *Country Roads* to competing magazines in the area, the advertisers thought the magazine was very different, and many times, this difference was a positive thing for the magazine. The following are excerpts from the responses.

It does have the events calendar, it is more indicative of the area happenings not necessarily individual parties, receptions or weddings...It's more of an event magazine. Things that are happening, things that are of interest to people and not targeted as a social magazine. It sets itself apart and has found its niches.²⁴

It's more of a New Orleans, Baton Rouge, St. Francisville, Natchez...more of a Mississippi River kind of appeal. It's just a local magazine but not tied to Baton Rouge only.²⁵

[*Country Roads*] is trying to get you to know more about a place to see or a place to go to rather than finding out about a person who lives in your community that is creative, exciting...although they do that, too. [*Country Roads*] is letting you know 'hey this is something you can do this weekend' or 'this is something you can see this weekend'...something we have that you may not know about that is within driving distance...²⁶

[*Country Roads* is] the only print media in the capital city, other than the [*Baton Rouge Business Report*], and [*The Baton Rouge Business Report*] has a very specialized thing, but [*Country Roads* and *The Baton Rouge Business Report*] are really the only ones that inform. The others are pretty much social rags and that don't work for me. It obviously

works for many people, but we don't operate from that angle and I don't think *Country Roads* does.²⁷

Do you think the image of Country Roads has changed in the last five years? Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of Country Roads? Do issues have the same appeal?

Many of the newcomers couldn't answer questions about whether they or readers perceived a change in the image of the magazine over the past five years because they have not been familiar with the publication for that long. However, for the most part, advertisers felt that the image of the magazine has been consistent. One loyalist said that the magazine has changed, but for the better. "...they haven't sat back on their laurels and said 'Hey, here this is! We're great and we don't need to get any better!' They said, 'We're great, but how can we improve?' and they've gone on and continued to improve and improve and improve and that's what businesses that want to stay in business do."²⁸

How would you characterize other Country Roads advertisers?

The last interview question dealing with Research Question 1 examined the advertisers' perceptions of their peers in the magazine. Below is a list of the types of businesses perceived to be in the magazine.

Table 4.6 Other Advertisers in the Magazine

Other Types of Advertisers in Country Roads	Times Mentioned Total
All Kinds of Business	6
Restaurants	5
Antiques Stores	4
Independently Owned Stores	4
Specialty Shops	2
Locally Owned Businesses	1
Bed & Breakfasts	1

The second research question in this study asked: To what extent is City-of-Origin an influence on the decision to buy advertising with a magazine? The following interview questions were asked in an attempt to answer this research question.

How would you describe St. Francisville? How would you describe Baton Rouge?

A variety of descriptions was offered in response to these questions. Although most advertisers viewed both cities positively, there was definitely a contrast in their perceptions of the two. The table below illustrates the responses.

Table 4.7 Descriptions of St. Francisville

Description of St. Francisville	Times Mentioned Total
Small-town	5
Endearing	3
Laid Back	2
Nice Place to Live	2
Rustic	2
Wealthy	1
Down-home	1
Growing	1
Other	1

Table 4.8 Descriptions of Baton Rouge

Description of Baton Rouge	Times Mentioned Total
Too Big	5
Sophisticated/Upscale	4
Busy	3
Other	3
Progressive	2
Mixture	1

Do you know where Country Roads' headquarters is located? Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine.

This questions was the most important question in the study. Ironically, only six of the fourteen answered it correctly. The others either answered incorrectly or did not guess. Consequently, when the participants were asked whether the location of the main office affected their desire to continue to advertise, most hadn't even thought about it.

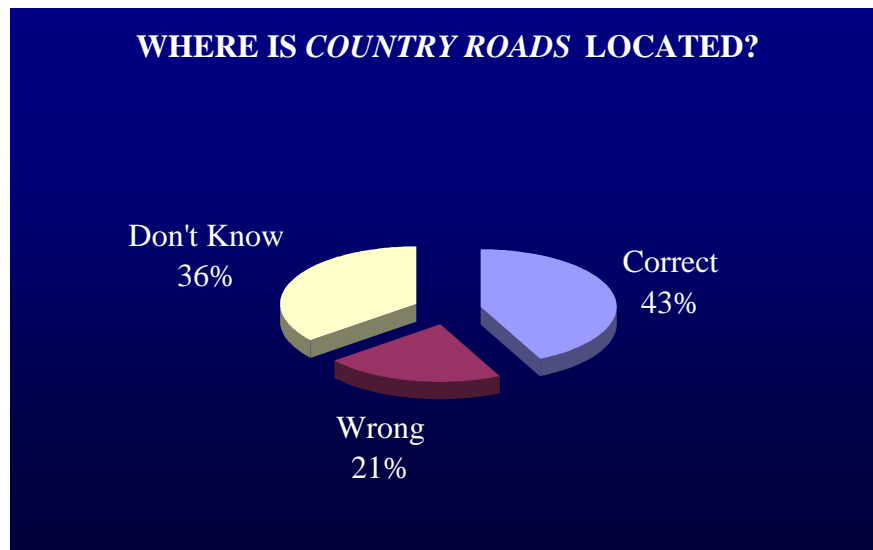


Figure 4.10 Breakdown of Responses to Where *Country Roads* is Located

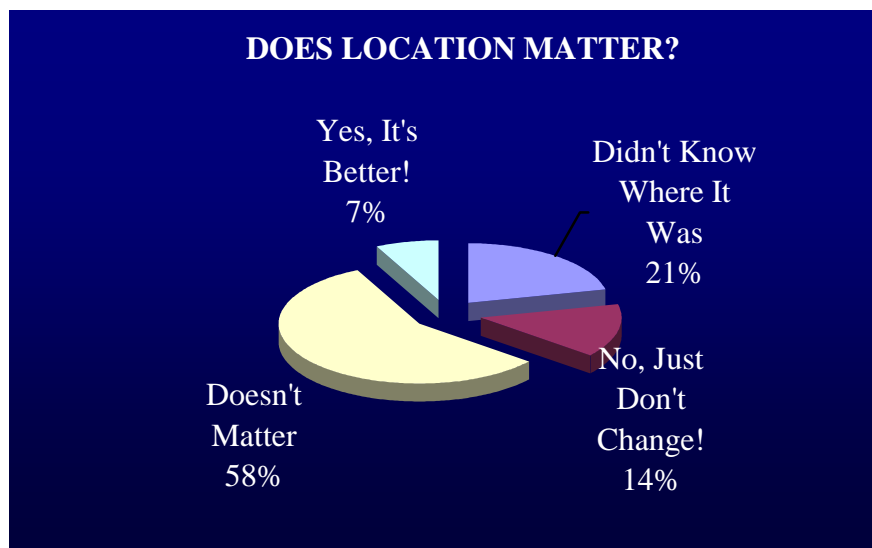


Figure 4.11 Does Headquarters Location Matter to Advertisers?

What signals do you think that Baton Rouge as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

Just as advertisers were not overly concerned about the move, they did not believe that readers had a problem with it either. One advertiser said, “I think as long as [the magazine] stays true to itself, readers won’t really notice or care about the move.”²⁹ Another respondent considered the question in a more practical way.

I don’t think that most people would notice that it had moved, to be honest. Well, I think that actually, it probably centralizes...they are starting to spread towards New Orleans and the city because there is so much to do...they are starting to move south of Baton Rouge and starting to talk about cities in that area... it does give them access to some of those places that are south of Baton Rouge and don’t want to have to drive all the way to St. Francisville to do business. It could be encouraging to those people, but I don’t think where a business is located, as long as it is not located outside of the state, is an issue.³⁰

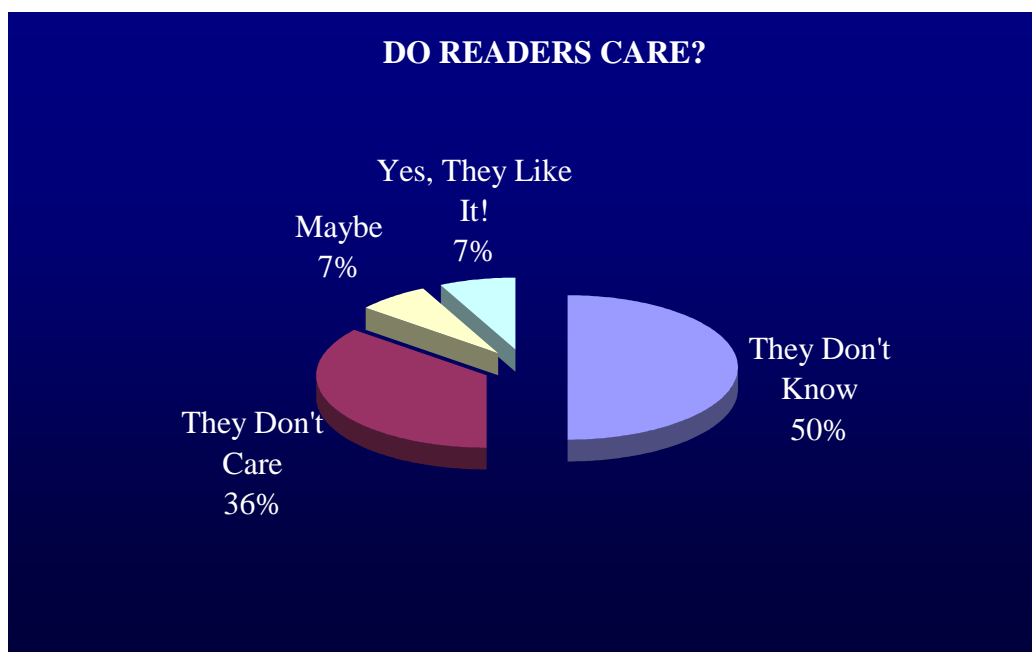


Figure 4.12 Do Readers Care About Where the Main Office is Located?

4.3 End Notes

- ¹ Personal Interview #9. 20 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ² Personal Interview #14. 27 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ³ Personal Interview #2. 15 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ⁴ Personal Interview #12. 23 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ⁵ Personal Interview #7. 19 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ⁶ Personal Interview #13. 26 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ⁷ Personal Interview #14
- ⁸ Personal Interview #3. 16 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ⁹ Personal Interview #10. 21 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ¹⁰ Personal Interview #12
- ¹¹ Personal Interview #3
- ¹² Personal Interview #12
- ¹³ Personal Interview #5. 19 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ¹⁴ Personal Interview #6. 19 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ¹⁵ Personal Interview #3
- ¹⁶ Personal Interview #8. 20 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- ¹⁷ Personal Interview #8
- ¹⁸ Personal Interview #6
- ¹⁹ Personal Interview #5
- ²⁰ Personal Interview #10
- ²¹ Personal Interview #3
- ²² Personal Interview #1. 13 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

²³ Personal Interview #2

²⁴ Personal Interview #10

²⁵ Personal Interview #2

²⁶ Personal Interview #1

²⁷ Personal Interview #4. 16 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

²⁸ Personal Interview #1

²⁹ Personal Interview #4

³⁰ Personal Interview #1

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

“I like the feel of the Feliciana’s. If [*Country Roads*] comes and starts trying to butt heads with Baton Rouge, I think they’ve lost a lot of their flavor. Nobody cares where the magazine comes from... It made me no difference when they moved their office...that was neither here nor there...keep the Feliciana feel and...go into Baton Rouge. Don’t suddenly become Baton Rouge and, ‘By the way, we also go into the Felicianas.’”

-Excerpt for Personal Interview #4¹

One of the main reasons for this study was to find out whether the city in which the magazine is published was an important criteria to advertisers when making the decision to start or continue to advertise with the magazine. The short answer to that question is, no. Not one of the interview participants mentioned city-of-origin as a dimension used to measure whether or not they should advertise with the magazine. Furthermore, only four of the participants could correctly answer the following question: Where is the headquarters located?

Although the basis of the COO theory is that consumers new to a product use things like the “made-in” label to determine whether or not they will purchase the product, the theory did not work in this study for several reasons. First, participants had positive experiences with and perceptions of St. Francisville, so there were no thoughts of inferiority where that was concerned. Second, the *Country Roads* staff has excellent customer service. Therefore, the advertisers did not really need to know or think about where the main office was located. Finally, *Country Roads* magazine is such a well-respected product that factors like reputation, customer service, and type of reader (extrinsic cues) enhance factors like article content, distribution and the location of the headquarters (intrinsic cues).

The two groups in this study were surprisingly similar in their thought processes. Going into the study, the assumption of the researcher and the staff at *Country Roads* was that the newcomers would be concerned about where the magazine was published. The consensus was

that the move would enhance the product and make it more attractive to potential advertisers who had hang-ups about spending dollars locally. That assumption was wrong. As in D.A. Schellinck's study, brand recognition, reputation and image appear to have had a stronger influence on the participants in the *Country Roads*' study in terms of purchase intentions.²

As stated in the literature review, there are two major tendencies in the COO theory. Consumers either regard products made in their own country more favorably, or they perceive products from developed countries in a more favorable light than underdeveloped countries. Advertisers often viewed the move from a logistical standpoint rather than using it as a way to determine quality, dependability and value.

5.1 Hypothesis One

On the surface, the results did not prove the first hypothesis because city-of-origin was never mentioned as a factor. By looking at what the respondents said, an observer would think that COO was not at all important to the advertisers. When the respondents were asked whether the location of the headquarters affected their decision to continue to advertise, the answer was a resounding no. "No! That's ridiculous! And I noticed that in the handout you gave me. What difference does it make?...I've been working with them longer while they were in St. Francisville, which, I don't go there, they come here. It doesn't affect me at all."³

On the contrary, by reading more into what was not said, the realization is that city-of-origin does have an influence. Consider the following. When asked what factors were important to the advertisers when deciding whether to advertise with the magazine, several of them mentioned geographic coverage or the reach of the magazine.

Another indicator is that many of the advertisers were regular readers of *Country Roads* before beginning to advertise in the magazine. The draw to the magazine, for many, was that it

did not focus only on Baton Rouge. Because the advertisers are looking for people with similar interests to shop in their stores or eat in their restaurants, *Country Roads* was considered a good fit for them.

As in the Aron O’Cass and Debra Grace study, during the structured interviews, respondents in this study discussed the general dimensions or factors that influenced their buying intentions.⁴ The advertisers in the *Country Roads* study agreed with the participants in O’Cass and Grace’s study that COO was not extremely influential. If we compare the list of dimensions nominated in the O’Cass and Grace study to those nominated in the *Country Roads* study, we see a few similarities. However, in the *Country Roads* study, more importance was given to experiences than city-of-origin.

Table 5.1 Comparison of O’Cass and Grace Study to *Country Roads* Study

Aron O’Cass and Debra Grace Study Dimensions	<i>Country Roads</i> Study Dimensions
Image of typical user Price Brand Personality Brand and self-image Brand name, trademark, etc. Experience with brand Country-of-origin Brand advertising Employees Word-of-mouth Publicity Servicescape Feelings	Type of Reader Cost of Ad Article Content Reputation of the Magazine Distribution Location Number of Years Established Geographic Coverage Customer Response to Particular Ad Customer Service Number of Copies Read Cost of the Magazine for Readers Color vs. Black & White Number of Times Published Per Year

C.M. Hans asserts that COO is more influential in high involvement products.⁵ With the help of *Country Roads'* graphics department and or an advertising agency, many of the advertisers view ad placement as a very "low involvement" process. This may contribute to the lack of intentional consideration of COO.

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graph LR; A["Initial City Image: Didn't Matter"] --> B["Beliefs About Attributes: Different Focus"]; B --> C["Brand Attitudes: Good Alternative"]; C --> D["Purchase Decisions: Try It Out"]; D --> E["Revised Country Image"]; E --> F["Purchase Decisions: Continue to Advertise"]; F --> G["Brand Attitudes: Respected Publication"]; G --> H["Beliefs About Attributes: Differences Are Good"]; H --> I["Revised Country Image"]; I --> J["Sign Advertising Contract"]; J --> K["Experience = Good/ Satisfied"]; K --> L["Familiarity With Attributes"]; L --> E;
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The flowchart illustrates a process for revising a country image based on advertising experience. It is organized into three horizontal rows of boxes, connected by arrows.

Top Row:

- Initial City Image: Didn't Matter** (boxed)
- Beliefs About Attributes: Different Focus
- Brand Attitudes: Good Alternative
- Purchase Decisions: Try It Out

Middle Row:

- Sign Advertising Contract
- Experience = Good/ Satisfied
- Familiarity With Attributes
- Revised Country Image** (boxed)

Bottom Row:

- Revised Country Image** (boxed)
- Beliefs About Attributes: Differences Are Good
- Brand Attitudes: Respected Publication
- Purchase Decisions: Continue to Advertise

Flow and Connections:

- Arrows connect the boxes in the top row from left to right.
- An arrow points from the top row's "Purchase Decisions: Try It Out" to the middle row's "Revised Country Image".
- An arrow points from the middle row's "Sign Advertising Contract" to the bottom row's "Revised Country Image".
- Arrows connect the boxes in the bottom row from left to right.
- An arrow points from the bottom row's "Purchase Decisions: Continue to Advertise" back to the middle row's "Revised Country Image".
- A dotted line connects the middle row's "Revised Country Image" to the bottom row's "Revised Country Image".

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5.3 Hypothesis Three

The final hypothesis was proven based on the thoughts expressed by the loyalists. Although the group predicts that it will advertise less frequently on an annual basis than the newcomers, the change in location has in no way deterred them from wanting to advertise in the publication. Just as one advertiser pointed out earlier, the loyalists were all advertising with the magazine well before the decision to move. Because they have in no way experienced a change in the level of customer service, it is not a major concern to them.

Ultimately, although advertisers insist that there is no direct correlation between where *Country Roads* is headquartered and whether or not they advertise, the underlying tone in most of the participants' responses is that the name "*Country Roads*" lends a certain amount of credibility to the fact that the magazine is about "country things." Contrary to the concerns of the staff, having the "country" connotation actually works as a positive for the company rather than a negative. "I mean from my point of view, I just hope they don't lose their image of being a smaller magazine that appeals to the country folks. Moving to the city might change their attitude a little bit. All it takes is two little city newspaper people to get involved and the whole focus will change, but I hope [the magazine] doesn't change."⁷

5.4 Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study is that the participants in this study may not be representative of the entire population of advertisers. By only selecting businesses from the December, January and February issues, the researcher may have missed the opportunity to interview businesses that are on a non-consecutive contract and happen to have not advertised in those particular months.

5.5 Recommended Future Research

One perspective that may have been beneficial to the magazine would be to know how St. Francisville advertisers feel about the move. The researcher did not attempt to include this segment of the advertisers in this study for two reasons. First, the purpose of the move was to centralize the magazine and to have better access to the largest portion of the target audience Baton Rouge. Consequently, from a public relations standpoint, the researcher chose to focus the study on the audience to whom the message was directed. Second, the researcher hopes that the magazine will consider duplicating this study in St. Francisville to get a feel of whether the move is seen as favorably there as it is in Baton Rouge.

At the rate the magazine is growing, it is inevitable that there may eventually be a consideration of expanding the geographic coverage further. Consequently, *Country Roads* has the opportunity to take this model and expand it to study readership and advertisers in other parts of its regional coverage as a method to decide if these expansions would be beneficial for the magazine. An upcoming study may also give current advertisers a chance to voice their support or concern for changes in the magazine.

Based on the findings, the researcher believes that, in order for *Country Roads* to continue to be successful and maintain its positive image, the staff must keep its finger on the pulse of the advertisers' perceptions of the image of the magazine. The findings of this study lead the researcher to believe that it is not so important where the main office is located as it is how good the advertisers feel about the product.

In any business, it is important to know and fully understand the product or service. It is also important to know who the target consumer is and what that consumer wants. *Country Roads* knows its focus and target audience now, but that may change in the future. The company

should continue to ask itself the following questions: How do the readers perceive me? How do my advertisers perceive me? What are we doing right? What could we do better? What drives advertisers away? What keeps them coming back? Is there a way to change their perceptions?

5.6 Conclusions

From a public relations standpoint, this study shows that the magazine has done an excellent job of communicating its core message: *Country Roads* is a regional cultural events guide. As far as the move is concerned, the advertisers seem to have a pretty good grasp on the reasons for the move, yet they have bought into the mission of the magazine and seem to believe that the magazine continues to be well received regardless of where the main office is located.

By exploring the factors mentioned by the advertisers, the study has allowed the staff at *Country Roads* to not only gain a greater knowledge of the concerns of the advertisers, but to also gain a fuller understanding of how these factors impact the advertisers' attitudes toward the brand. Perceptions are not stagnant. They inevitably change over time. Now that *Country Roads* knows what motivates the advertisers, the magazine can appropriately tailor its sales and marketing efforts in the future.

5.6 End Notes

¹ Personal Interview #4. 16 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

² Ahmed, Zafar U. and James P. Johnson. "Country-of-origin and brand effects on consumers' evaluation of cruise lines." International Marketing Review 19 (2002): 279.

³ Personal Interview #6. 19 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

⁴ O'Cass, Aron and Debra Grace. "An exploratory perspective of service brand associations." Journal of Services Marketing 17 (2003): 452-475.

⁵ Srikatanyoo, Natthawut and Juergen Gnoth. "Country image and international tertiary education." Journal of Brand Management 10 (2002): 139-146.

⁶ Jaffe, Eugene D., and Israel D. Nebenzahl. National Image and Competitive Advantage. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2001.

⁷ Personal Interview #2. 15 January 2004. Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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Personal Interview #5. 19 January (2004). Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Personal Interview #6. 19 January (2004). Tape Recording. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW REQUEST SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Arianne Bellizaire, and I am a graduate student at LSU. I am working on a study concerning *Country Roads* magazine, and I am looking to interview current Baton Rouge advertisers. May I speak with the person who is in charge of advertising?

How long have you been advertising with the magazine?

I would like to set up an appointment to conduct an interview with you. It should take no more than 45 minutes depending on the length of your answers. Would you be willing to participate in my study?

What is a good date and time for you?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH QUESTION: Demographics

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

How long have you been advertising with *Country Roads*?

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

RESEARCH QUESTION: What dimensions do Baton Rouge advertisers use when evaluating magazine brands?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazine to advertise in?

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

What factor was least important? Why?

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

How large is your budget for advertising?

What image do you connect to the price of the ads?

How did you hear about the magazine?

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

What kind of people read *CR*?

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

To what degree do you think *CR* meets your needs?

What image do you think *Country Roads* wants you to have about the magazine?

What characteristics do you think *Country Roads* should emphasize in its marketing?

If you compared *CR* to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Do you think the image of *CR* has changed in the last five years?

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of *CR*?

How would you characterize other *CR* advertisers?

RESEARCH QUESTION: To what extent is COO an influence on the decision to buy advertising with a magazine?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

How would you describe St. Francisville?

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Do you know where *CR*'s headquarters is located?

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

APPENDIX C

STUDY CONSENT FORM

1. Study Title: *Country Roads Magazine: Has The Move From The “Country” Influenced Baton Rouge Advertisers’ Buying Habits?*
2. Performance Site: Various Sites
3. Investigator: The following investigator is available for questions about this study: Arianne P. Bellizaire 225-892-8031
4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to determine whether the magazine’s decision to relocate its headquarters has had any effect on Baton Rouge advertisers’ buying habits or perceptions of the brand.
5. Subject Inclusion: Individuals who are from the Baton Rouge area and are currently advertising in the magazine.
6. Number of Subjects: 14
7. Study Procedures: From a list of Baton Rouge advertisers, subjects will be randomly selected. After explaining the purpose of the study, the investigator will schedule a time to conduct an in-depth interview.
8. Benefits: Subjects will be offered no monetary benefits in exchange for participation in this study.
9. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of information regarding the identity of the subject. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of study records.
10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.
11. Privacy: Results of this study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless law requires disclosure.
12. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects’ rights or other concerns, I can contact Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator’s obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW #1 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

Uh...I probably should have even given you over to my sister who handles the advertising...um...we've probably been advertising...I would say (pause) How long have they been in business?

Twenty years, actually

Oh! You're kidding! Probably 1997 is when we really started advertising...I would think around then.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

I think [my sister] advertises just about every month...um...she may skip...well she probably does at least ten times a year.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

About the same. I think we've been pretty happy with it.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

[My sister] probably could have better answered this question because she really does handle all of the advertising. I do the buying and she does the advertising...um...usually...um...I know when we first started advertising with another magazine, it was because we considered it hit our demographic area. It hit a lot of the area around the shop and *Country Roads* did not so I know we probably thought we would be hitting a lot of the countryside up toward St. Francisville and we would catch people who were coming maybe into Baton Rouge and going up into the

countryside to see the areas up there...they would see our ad, and while they were in Baton Rouge, they would come by and see the shop...so we thought that we would pick up some business that way. I know when I travel, I like to pick up the little newspapers that talk about what's going on outside the city, too...not just what's in the city.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Usually, the most important thing is the value.

What factor was least important? Why?

The least important...um...It's hard to say because everything has its own degree of importance...the number of times it's published is important, how many issues they publish is important, how many...where they actually distribute it is important, whether it's free or there is a charge is important...um... there is no one thing that I would say is least important because when we advertise with someone else, he does his [ads] in color and [my sister] doesn't really do a lot of color [in *Country Roads*]...So that would probably be...that's not important to us.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

We do from time to time. Not on a regular basis. When we first started the business 18 years ago, we did have someone that did our ads for us...and as the age of the computer has gone on, and we've gotten a lot better at it, [my sister] is able to do a lot of it herself and also we've built up kind of a library of ads also...a lot of places will do the ads for you so that helps too, in fact, I think *Country Roads* is coming tomorrow to work with me on next months ad...I have to get involved when they come in to take pictures...I'm involved in that aspect of it. They ask me, "What's new?" and "What do you need us to take a picture of?" and I get involved in that aspect. So no, we don't have someone else get involved with the ads...unless we do TV

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

No, my sister and I determine where we advertise.

How large is your budget for advertising?

We do Morning Advocate...we do house and home on an irregular basis, not every month...we do Town Favorites, we do some on Cox Cable stations...um...we've just about dropped InRegister, we do Catholic Commentator. We advertise in some things that are only done once a year such as Quota Club Tour puts together a book that you are given when you go on a tour. We have an ad in that...but as far as sitting down and saying this is going to be our budget for the year, [my sister] really more or less says "this is the money that we have at this time, how much do I think I can spend this month?" That's more or less what we do...Oh and we do a lot of radio also, but one thing with radio is that a lot of times, they'll do specials and if you wait they'll call you with a special rate.

What image do you connect to the price of the ads?

I don't know how to answer that...the price seems to be comparable to me...

How did you hear about CR?

I don't know which came first, Dorcas is a friend of my sister-in-law. I don't know if we found out about *Country Roads*...my brother and sister-in-law live in St. Francisville, but I'm not sure which came first.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Um...probably people that are new to Baton Rouge...passing through Baton Rouge.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yes, I do...It also reaches just people who are living in Baton Rouge that already know about it, I think because we have people that walk into the shop and immediately say "Where is the newest issue of *Country Roads*?" So it is a magazine that they look for...we have one lady that comes in every month and she looks for *Country Roads*, *House and Home*, *Town Favorites*, and...well she doesn't look for *City Social*, but she comes in every month, the first week of the month and looks for those free magazines and she comes all the way from Zachary. Now explain that one to me! But it's nice to know that *Country Roads* is something that people consistently want to see every single month.

What kind of people read CR?

Upper-middle class. Definitely upper-middle class.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

The same image we try to get out all along is that we have something affordable for everyone. Anybody can come in and find something that they can afford.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

We're still trying! It is something you fight all the time.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I think they do meet our needs because it is a good product and because they are continually changing, increasing, renewing ways to improve themselves.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

That they are always looking for a way to let us know what's going on. They are not...they haven't been stagnant. They haven't just stayed in the St. Francisville area. They are always

trying to increase their area of...the area that they go into. It's spreading and spreading and spreading and it's no longer just a St. Francisville magazine. It's ever increasing...the scope of their magazine is always increasing.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

I think most people want to know what's going on and where they can go to have fun...what events are taking place, what activities they can do...I think that's what people are looking for in *Country Roads*. They want to know things they can do on the weekend. They want places to go, things to see...not necessarily things that cost money and that's what they look for in *Country Roads*.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Well, it's more extensive in its coverage as far as...well South Baton Rouge journal covers South Baton Rouge and it can focus on individual people in that area whereas CR is not necessarily focusing on a person, it's focusing on places. [CR] is trying to get you to know more about a place to see or a place to go to rather than finding out about a person who lives in your community that is creative, exciting...although they do that too. [CR] is letting you know "hey this is something you can do this weekend" or "this is something you can see this weekend"...something we have that you may not know about that is within driving distance...if friends are visiting from out of town, you can go see this or you can go do this. So many people I know, even here in Baton Rouge, complain that there is nothing to do. That is a constant complaint in downtown Baton Rouge "there's nothing to do". *Country Roads* is filling that void as far as outside the city of Baton Rouge. If you look at it, there are millions of things going on all the time.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

It's gotten better, I mean just because it's gotten more comprehensive. Of course, they haven't sat back on their laurels and said "hey, here this is! We're great and we don't need to get any better!" They said, "We're great, but how can we improve?" and they've gone on and continued to improve and improve and improve and that's what businesses that want to stay in business do.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

It's always been good, but it's very good [now].

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I really can't answer that because I really don't...I have a friend who tells me that she turns to the editorial page all the time because she enjoys [James'] column all the time. But it's not something I really sit down and discuss with people. It actually has come up in a conversation so it is something that obviously someone enjoys.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

There are a lot of gift shops, a lot of antique shops, bed and breakfasts. It's probably...the main focus of the advertisers is on places to go and things to do. Shops to go to, restaurants to go to which is probably what it should be because that is what the magazine is focusing on...experiences to do when you have time off. You wouldn't want probably service stations and malls because that's not the type of thing that they're doing.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

Oh just a wonderful laid back atmosphere that has the feeling of what...how people lived 100 years ago. People still enjoy the small-town life. My brother won't even leave St. Francisville to come to Baton Rouge. He says it's too big.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

It's too big! Too much traffic (laughs)

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Yes! It's on Tara and Goodwood. I just found out less than two weeks ago.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I couldn't have told you that it wasn't still in St. Francisville! As far as I knew, it had always been there. Wait no! South Baton Rouge Journal is located on Tara and Goodwood. Where are they located? See, I couldn't have told you where it was. It doesn't matter to me.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I don't think that most people would notice that it had moved, to be honest. Well, I think that actually, it probably centralizes...they are starting to spread towards New Orleans and the city because there is so much to do...they are starting to move south of Baton Rouge and starting to talk about cities in that area... it does give them access to some of those places that are south of Baton Rouge and don't want to have to drive all the way to St. Francisville to do business. It could be encouraging to those people, but I don't think where a business is located, as long as it is not located outside of the state, is an issue. I wouldn't want to deal with a business that was in

Texas or something like that. I would want to know that the business is locally owned. I am a strong believer in dealing with locally owned businesses.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW #2 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

I've been advertising with *Country Roads* at least 9 months.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

Consecutively...nine months.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

I've done it nine months consecutively, and I'm going to sign a new contract to go through all of 2004.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

A lot of things were important...region, number of copies distributed...

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Um...the region it approached. Within driving distance of Baton Rouge is the people I'm trying to get...and umm...I like the highways that was associated with where the magazine was covering. I-10, I-12, US Hwy 61...basically, I just like the region. I don't really need anything greater than that. Until you can fax a hamburger through the Internet, it doesn't really work [much farther than that]. (laughs)

What factor was least important? Why?

Definitely price. I really didn't care about the cost as long as it reached my audience.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

We've basically done that in house. The ad companies have helped us with our thought process, but we basically design them ourselves.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

How large is your budget for advertising?

I think we have a reasonable budget for what we want to do.

How did you hear about CR?

I've read the magazine and I've seen it on the newsstands, and basically, I've been a drop off point for the magazine, too.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Anybody who likes cheeseburgers, I guess. Really, any age group. I mean, I'm like anyone else. I'd like to get the more affluent age group, but I'm not shooting just for them. I'm shooting for anybody who wants to walk in here and get a good sandwich, a good hamburger or a good plate lunch.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yes. I know that I am.

What kind of people read CR?

Actually, the first group I would say is women...white women from about...I don't know...25-47. Then it just breaks down from there.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

I want to communicate to my customers that this is an old fashioned, run-of-the-mill, hole-in-the-wall hamburger stand that still does things the old fashioned way. We make everything from scratch.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I am definitely getting my money's worth!

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I think it meets 100% of my needs...The degree?...umm... to the tenth degree.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

They want me in their magazine which represents, just by the name *Country Roads*, more down-home, more down-to-earth, more...just basic. Not a whole lot of...what do you call it?...it's, for me, more of an older feel to it.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Well, just the fact that they have that much distribution. How many readers they actually have, what is their group that they are shooting for also. Not necessarily who I'm shooting for...but we should be on the same team [when we are advertising]. That's all I'm interested in. From what I hear from the public, they have a good following.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Well, most of the magazines in this area are shooting just for the Baton Rouge area. *Country Roads* is probably a little bit greater than the Baton Rouge area as far as appeal. It's more of a

New Orleans, Baton Rouge, St. Francisville, Natchez...more of a Mississippi River kind of appeal. It's just a local magazine but not tied to Baton Rouge only.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I've been associated with it for the last five year. I think it's roughly the same. Sometimes it seems like they have more advertisers and less articles, but that's probably just to keep up with the cost of things.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Yes, I do.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I'm sure of the people who read it front cover to back cover probably notice some thing, but for the most part, nobody is noticing a change.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

I see lots of little mom and pop antique stores in there. I see nice, affluent restaurants. I see out of the way restaurants. I see out of the way little country stores. I don't know...I see all kinds of stuff in that magazine. Stuff I don't normally see.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

St. Francisville is a nice little community. It seems to be growing. I know the property value is up through the moon. I think it's a nice place to live.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Baton Rouge just happens to be the capital city and it's got some traffic problems! I think Baton Rouge is fine for *Country Roads*. *Country Roads* benefits from Baton Rouge and Baton Rouge benefits from *Country Roads*.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

I know that it was in Natchez...

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I mean from my point of view, I just hope they don't lose their image of being a smaller magazine that appeals to the country folks. Moving to the city might change their attitude a little bit. All it takes is two little city newspaper people to get involved and the whole focus will change, but I hope [the magazine] doesn't change.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I'm sure the magazine was printed 3,4,5 times before people even noticed the change.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW #3 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

It's been about two years...a little bit more than 2 years. I opened in August of 2001, so I started advertising in June of that same year.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

With them I've had contracts...I think it's a twelve month contract, so it's usually every month. Every now and then I'll skip a month, especially in the summer when it's dead...umm...but...it's usually ten to twelve months a year.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We have that same schedule. I think I have a ten month contract in which I can skip two months...I think that's what I have now with them.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Mainly that the magazine was...it's reach...also how accessible it is to people. For example, *Country Roads* is free, so it's...you know...basically people can see it and just pick it up anywhere like CC's coffee or wherever they have it and read it...also that it's been here, established for a while now...umm...you know...it's a popular magazine.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Umm...that it wasn't...and I don't know how this is going to sound, but it wasn't like a cheap publication...umm...I liked the layout. I often picked it up and read it. It was interesting, it had good articles, good advertising...umm...the price was reasonable for advertising...so

umm...mainly the reach is really important because, not only does it serve Baton Rouge, but it is in the out skirts...you know...like in Mandeville, Covington, New Orleans...umm...I want to say even Mississippi, so yeah the reach was really important.

What factor was least important? Why?

Umm...the least important would probably be...let's say that it was all black and white maybe or that it was...a glossy finish. That really didn't matter because, I mean, there are other magazines that are all glossy in color and I just don't care for them. It doesn't have to be the actual look of it. To me, *Country Roads* is just a better magazine.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

No, I do the ads myself. I like to do my own advertising and my own design and pictures because I like clean images, and if you notice my ads are really simple and not a lot of stuff. I just...I think that that kind of shows how the boutique is. It's just very simple and I personally get...I don't know I just can't see a lot of cramming and [ads that are too] busy. I like it simple. That's why this store is very simple. There's a lot of space, so it gives it that European look and I think that's how it reads in the advertising.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

Umm...it's fairly competitive. I also advertise in *InRegister* and even the LSU newspapers, so the price range of the size that I purchase is pretty much competitive. I don't do color because that just bumps up the price, but...umm...for the price and the size, I thought it was fairly good...and it didn't...I think all around, it's about the same price as other magazines, so it really

isn't any cheaper and it doesn't make the magazine any cheaper or high end because it's pretty much the same price around town.

How large is your budget for advertising?

I spend as much as I need to as long as I feel like I'm getting a the value, you know.

How did you hear about CR?

Umm...I used to read it all the time. Let's say I would go into a coffee shop. If I would sit and drink coffee, I would definitely pull it and bring it with me, so I had issues at home that when I was ready to advertise, I just looked up it and called.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Well, since this is a ladies shoe store, definitely the ladies. Umm...age...is somewhere between college and early forties. I have a price range of shoes...my shoes have different price ranges, so you know, it's open market to whoever. Like I have shoes from \$39 to over \$100 so I have a variety. It's not like I target a certain income its mainly an age...but the funny thing is the other day I had a girl come in 13 years old and she had seen a pair of shoes and she had to have them and her mom bought them for her yesterday so I was very surprised that, you know, I'm thinking college and a few high school girls but 13? I think she's my youngest customer ever.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yes. As a matter of fact I had people cut ads out that I put in *Country Roads* and bring it to me and say "Oh, this is what I want. This is the shoe." Or they'll call and say, "I saw your ad. How much is it?" So, yeah, it does work.

What kind of people read CR?

I think mainly women because we have more time (laughs). We like all that stuff. Age-wise, I think *Country Roads* is read by mainly college girls all the way up to forties. Maybe older. I think the locations that it's at...like for example it's at CC's Coffee, Christian Street Furniture, and it's at different locations so I think that it is picked up by women of medium to high income.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

The cleanliness of the ad gives it an image of a nice boutique. Sometimes it gives it an image of a high end boutique. Sometimes I do get customers who are surprised by the pricing. I have shoes and prices for almost all the ranges. It does sometimes give a little image that this is a high end boutique, but it's really not. It's just because I like it simple.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I think so. I really do think so, and like I said, I've gotten so many calls for items that I've advertised...you know, people inquiring about it or coming in with a cut out of it. I really do think that it does portray what I'm trying to get across.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

It meets all of my needs. I've gotten phone calls from all over...Mississippi. People have called in and said "Oh, I saw this bracelet in your ad in *Country Roads*."

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

It's really not a social, social magazine. I think that I see it as an all around magazine because it gives you info on B&Bs and restaurants. It's basically a magazine about Louisiana and its surroundings. What [Louisiana] has to offer. It's not a social magazine, so it's good because it has a little bit of everything. There's good articles to read about things that happen around town.

I think the name says it. *Country Roads*. It just shows you about Louisiana and all of its little corners.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

The reach. How it reaches a lot more than other magazines. Like I said, it's not only in Baton Rouge, but it runs even into Mississippi. The fact that it is free, so that anyone can pick it up is also important. But mainly it's wide range of audience is important. Because it has all of the those good articles and good advertising it's just a good magazine.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

It's got a lot of info, you know. One month they'll focus on restaurants or bed and breakfasts...but I think the accessibility of it is great. I want to say there are about four or five other magazines in the area. I only advertise in two magazines in this area. There are two I found [that] were really the best because they had the most reach and they would target the audience that I really want. For example, the *[Baton Rouge] Business Report* is mainly targeted to men and some business women, but it's mainly men who read it. I don't have men's shoes, so [that magazine] is not for me. *Country Roads'* years of establishment is something I like. The fact that it's still around...I'm not sure how many years they've been around, but I like the fact that they've been around for a while and people know it. It's not a brand new magazine that's trying to break through the market. Overall, *Country Roads* and *InRegister* are my two favorites.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

No, I think they are maintaining that image of being a more informative magazine than some of the others.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Well, I haven't really been reading the magazine that long, but I see that the magazine consistently puts out a quality product.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

People who have read the magazine for a long time can probably see a difference and a growth in the magazine. New readers probably don't see much change because they don't know.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

There's a variety of retailers that advertise from one end to the other. It could be children's clothing to restaurants to little boutiques. I think it's mainly independently owned companies that advertise in *Country Roads*. [However] A chain, for example like Harold's...I don't think you'll see many of them and I think that's part of the image of the magazine...that it's a local Louisiana magazine versus a magazine [in which] you'll find boutique chains or store chains. I think that we're pretty much all locally owned businesses. That's probably what we all have in common.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

It's a cute little town in one of Louisiana's hidden corners. I think there's a certain endearing quality about it.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Much more progressive and upscale. Definitely not in a hidden corner!

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Actually, when I first contacted them, I really didn't know that they were located in St. Francisville. It really didn't matter because the sales rep. was always in town and always reachable.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No. When they moved, I really didn't feel the difference. It hasn't really affected me in any way.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

You know, there are probably some people out there that aren't even aware of it. It really doesn't...it hasn't affected or made any changes on things in the magazine at all. So, no. Like I said...I don't think...people didn't realize it was printed in...it's not printed in St. Francisville but that the headquarters was in St. Francisville before they moved downtown. So no, I don't think it's had any affect.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW #4 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

I would guess that we've been advertising for about five or six years.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

We have a six times contract.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

I don't know that I'll do six. I will set up some sort of schedule with them either four or six times this year.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Well, when I started [looking] I didn't know so I just basically hit everything that was available which was *InRegister*, *Country Roads*...umm...I think *South Baton Rouge Journal* came along later, and I simply tried them out just to see what would happen. My inclination was *InRegister* at first, and over the years that went down, down, down because I was getting fewer and fewer results. I get better results with *Country Roads* because of the content of the paper and...it more matches what I sell.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

What really led me to buy into the idea of consistently advertising with them was my customers' comments of seeing the ad and wanting to see a specific piece that they had seen in the ad. Just really...the fact that they mentioned it by name. You have to guess that it's working.

What factor was least important? Why?

Probably the pricing...the cost of the advertisements.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

Actually, in the fall we started using an advertising agency to help us through the holidays. That's the first time I had used an agency.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

They have some input, but very little. We've pretty well done what we've wanted to do through the Christmas season. That's the only time we've worked together.

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

It's competitive. It's not too expensive, and I feel like I get my money's worth.

How large is your budget for advertising?

It depends on the time of year and what we're trying to do. Advertising is an investment, and, for the most part, it works...but the majority of our business comes from word-of-mouth.

How did you hear about CR?

Probably literally picking it up myself and looking through it...seeing it in Barnes and Nobles and reading it.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Probably, for lack of a better term, middle to upper-middle class type people. Not the super rich and not poor people. Neither one of them have much interest in my stuff...for different reasons...but our average customer is a shop owner, a lawyer, a pretty affluent person, but again the super rich really don't find...they think our jewelry is too subtle. (laughs). It doesn't shout out "Hello, I'm from L.A."

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yeah, more so than any print type media that I use.

What kind of people read CR?

The same person I'm looking for. People interested in history and in antiques. People read the articles in *Country Roads* as opposed to other magazines in the area. [Other magazines] write about people. [Their readers] look to see if they know someone in it. They don't read the articles, they look to see if they recognize someone in the pictures. Nobody wants to read about the "krewe of so-and-so" unless they know somebody.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

We want to show that we've been in business over thirty years. I think the image we want to portray is that of elegant jewelry. We've been here [in this location] that's 300 feet off the road. Again the most important advertising we get is word of mouth. We don't get any walk in traffic. We get business from referrals. We have to have excellent customer service. Whereas someone in the mall may be able to get away with more because people are constantly dropping in, we have to rely on return traffic. Advertising is not my biggest advertiser! Our reputation is what gets return business.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I do believe that we are successful in communicating that image and message.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

Like I said before, the reason I decided to advertise more regularly with [Country Roads] was because I was getting the response I wanted from it. My satisfaction with the magazine has probably increased with every year I've advertised.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

Actually, probably very similar to what [we are looking for]. It is...the theme of *Country Roads* is of rather...a little on the high brow side, but it's done in a very friendly and laid back manner. The owners [of the magazine] are like that, at least they strike me as being like that.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Their niche is exactly what I am describing. They are informing and educating the public.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

They are the only print media in the capital city, other than the [Baton Rouge] *Business Report*, and [The Baton Rouge *Business Report*] has a very specialized thing, but those two magazines are really the only ones that inform. The others are pretty much social rags and that don't work for me. It obviously works for many people, but we don't operate from that angle and I don't think *Country Roads* does.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

No. I don't think so, and while you're at it...I don't know if this is the place, but I wish they would go to a white or vellum paper. I think that they are much too nice a paper to still be printing on that old, rough looking paper.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

In terms of article content, I think they have always produced a quality product. No, I don't think there has been much change in that area.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I don't think so, no. If they do see a change, it's probably for the better...like the fact that the magazine is always growing.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

I'd almost have to flip through and look, but I think in general, the advertisers that are...I think that probably the majority of the advertisers have a like mindset to the paper. There are some odds and ends in there, but for the most part, we are all trying to connect with the message *Country Roads* sends to its readers.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

I get no business out of Natchez. I do get business out of St. Francisville and that area, and of course, as more and more people go out to that area, more business comes back. I feel for that Feliciana type of thing, and I think that's good.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Very different from St. Francisville. It has its positives and negatives, but it is very different.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Yes, I know that it's in downtown Baton Rouge.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I like the outfit. I like the way they do business. I like the non-high pressure tactics. They don't make it personal. I have a wonderful sales person who is wonderful. She's very easy to talk to, and very easy to work with. She doesn't come and try to "sell" me. She just offers her product and provides excellent customer service. That's how I try to do business. I certainly don't want to sell jewelry by asking all of my friends, "Well how could you buy jewelry from someone else? I thought you were my friend!" You should buy what you want, and hopefully, I have it and you'll buy it from me, but if you don't you don't.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I think as long as [the magazine] stays true to itself, readers won't really notice or care about the move. I like the feel of the Feliciana's. If [*Country Roads*] comes and starts trying to butt heads

with Baton Rouge, I think they've lost a lot of their flavor. Nobody cares where the magazine comes from. I could care less about that. It made me no difference when they moved their office...that was neither here nor there. I like the feel of...keep the Feliciana feel and we go into Baton Rouge. Don't suddenly become Baton Rouge and, "By the way, we also go into the Felicianas."

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW #5 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

This will be our seventh month.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

Every month.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

Once a month. We just signed a year...an annual contract.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Okay. We first considered our budget, which at the time was very small because we had just opened our business. *Country Roads* was the most reasonable as far as price was concerned so that's why we chose it.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Definitely the cost.

What factor was least important? Why?

Ad size and layout and all of that wasn't really that important because I didn't know much about that. We just wanted something that would work for us.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

No, we don't use an agency. *Country Roads* has input and the people here have input. Everything has to be cleared by me, and among the three of us, the ad comes together.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

Like I said, it was the most reasonable of all the magazines we looked at. It didn't make me think the ad was any cheaper...in quality, I mean.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Our budget is still very small.

How did you hear about CR?

I just picked up several magazines in the area and flipped through them. I liked the feel of *Country Roads* so I decided to go with them.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

I want everybody in my store. I don't...and I have found that...umm... there is a certain...I have found that people want me...I've been asked that question a lot, but I don't have a particular audience, you know. I want anybody who wants to come in and look.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yeah, because I have people who come in here and say that they've seen our ad.

What kind of people read CR?

Just like I don't have any one type of customer, I don't think *Country Roads* does either. I mean I don't think there is any one type of person that reads it.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

That we're different and we have something for both jewelry and furniture lovers. We're just different.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Yes, that's why we'll keep advertising with *Country Roads*.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I'm very satisfied. I would not have signed a contract for an entire year if I had not been satisfied. Our particular sales person is just great. We love her to death!

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

That they are different as well. They are more informative than any other magazine and they have great customer service. I remember when we first started, we advertised with *InRegister* and they misspelled jewelry!!! That's like the most important word! How could you misspell it? We didn't do them again.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Their customer service and their amount of readers. It's a classy magazine and less of a "socialite gossip" magazine.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I think it's more of a cultural calendar...umm...which is great...umm. It's more... if I had to list them, it would be at the top of my list. *Country Roads* and the [*South Baton Rouge*] *Journal* are probably my two favorites.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I haven't really been familiar with it for that long...so...I don't know.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Like I said, I don't know how it has evolved. Just over the past couple of months that I've been advertising, it seems pretty consistent.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I really don't know.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

I don't find that there are stores that are like...stop-n-go or convenience stores advertising in *Country Roads*...so I would said those kinds of stores aren't.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

It's probably a small town with a nice, down-home feel. Everybody probably knows everybody...no secrets!

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

The opposite...more of a big city feel.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Yes, it's right near my church First Methodist.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I didn't even know that it was located in St. Francisville at first. I was leaving church one day and I saw the office. I said, "Oh my gosh, there's *Country Roads*."

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I don't think it's a big deal. I wasn't aware that it was in St. Francisville. I do know that there are a lot of St. Francisville advertisers in the magazine, but I don't really think it's a big deal. I do wish they would write more stories...stories about people. That's one thing that *South Baton Rouge Journal* does, they write stories about local people. Because you know, people like to hear...that's something that people pick up the *Journal* and do. They read about people, and people have come in here and said, "You know, the *South Baton Rouge Journal* would do a story on you if you advertise with them." I've heard that SO many times, and I already knew that they would, but I had my own personal problem with them that I had to overcome.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW #6 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

Since I started my business which has been about...we've been in this location about four and a half years. Before, we were down the street maybe six to nine months previous to moving here. So you could say approximately five and a half years.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

I have a monthly contract.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We'll keep the same schedule.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Well, first off, for me it was strictly price as well as their...their umm...I don't want to say their readership necessarily because my customers aren't...you can't pigeonhole them. I honestly thought, I wanted the advertising at the point where I started advertising, I didn't really think any further than how much money I could pay.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

How much it would cost.

What factor was least important? Why?

I don't know if there was any one thing that was least important.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

No. I do my ads. What I do is I use vintage photographs, I use tongue in cheek...umm...taglines and it's all...I mean...I have absolutely no experience running a business. I have absolutely no experience running advertising. I just am doing this, and as far as running the store, I'm breaking all the rules from the way it's done traditionally in this business. When I read the newspaper or I read magazines, most of them just go right past me. I couldn't tell you what was in them and the few that do catch my eye, I'm not really sure why unless its just something where my brain just clicks and says, "Hey, this is something interesting!"...so...I...what I do is I e-mail them each month a vintage photograph and it can be a personal photograph or something we "stole" off the Internet, and then I have my tagline and usually I have my tagline and then I search frantically for a photograph to meet my deadline...I give them my idea of how I want it arranged and then I tell them, "You're the professional. You know what you're doing, you do it." They set it up and...my grammar is...I never went to college. Grammer and English and Spelling...Oh my gosh! I can't even find...I beat the spell check on the computer because you know if you don't have the first three letters right, then you can forget it. I tell [*Country Roads*] if anything's wrong, I expect you to correct it because I don't know didley!" But this is the look I'm after, this is the feel I'm after and then they do it and it's fabulous...and so then with my other advertisers, I send to other advertisers. I do *The Reveille* and an antiques journal that's regional and I have done others which I'm not doing now, but anyway, I send them all the same things at the same time...but then like *The Reveille*, I tell them to pull *Country Roads*' ad to see how it looks. *Country Roads* has to build the ad a month before or two weeks before it goes to press. Well, *The Reveille*, they're doing it like today for tomorrow so they can go and pull copy and I'll say "This is what [the ad] should look like. It doesn't have to be an exact match, and you don't need to photocopy it, but that's the feel, the look, the basic arrangement and then they do their thing to it

and it doesn't...you know, if you put the ads side by side their similar, but their not the same and *Country Roads* has been excellent in working with me on that and being patient with me when I'm...you know, down at the last minute but I feel like 90% of the design is mine and then they're the experts that pull it together and make it right.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

I don't really know how to answer that...I think that it's well worth the investment if that's what you're asking.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Ridiculously small!

How did you hear about CR?

[My salesperson] called on me several times and I umm she...she was aggressive in that she's attentive but she wasn't obnoxious and I had some from...a lady from *South Baton Rouge Journal*, she was obnoxious. She was telling me who my customer was and I didn't appreciate that and she was selling the virtues of the magazine whereas [*Country Roads* my salesperson] didn't. She just said this is what we can do for you and this is how much it costs and we will work with you...and...they have...so umm...I really didn't think of anything further than that. Since then, I've looked at other publications. I've tried being in other publications, and I've found that I didn't get the return on what I spent.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

They're pretty all over the place from economic, education, race, everything so we don't pigeonhole our customers and we don't target the product.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Now if I'm at the point of every person coming into my store, I ask them if they've been here before and if they've never been in here before, I ask them how did they hear about us. If they say they saw an ad somewhere, I ask them specifically where and that's how I figured out what was working and what wasn't.

What kind of people read CR?

I don't know and I don't care. I really don't. All I care about is if they see the ad and if they come in. I've never really thought about it, and frankly, I don't read *Country Roads*. It's not because I don't care about the magazine...I don't have time. I don't read anything except the funnies in the newspaper and do the crosswords. I really, I used to read the paper, but I don't have time. I glance at the headlines, and then I ask my husband, "What's going on in the world today?" So I just don't have time, so I don't read the paper.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

I wanted my ads to reflect that...that we're a little quirky, a little mysterious where people look at it and go, "Hmm, what is going on over there?" And umm...and I wanted it to be fun cause frankly, I don't look at ads.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I ask people, "how did you hear about us?" and when they say they saw an ad, 9 times out of 10 it was *Country Roads* and my customers come in and comment on the ads you know like, "Oh I

really like the ad this month! I can't wait to see the next ad." So that tells me they are being seen. The other publications, I didn't hear anything or I heard less so that's why I stopped. When that contract ended, I didn't renew...and of course the Reveille's been good especially with the Time Warp because the kids are reading it and also faculty and some parents.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I think it meets my needs for many reasons...they tolerate me, they allow me to not pay on time, they will build the ad and they don't have this ego trip like "Who are you to be telling us how to do the ad?" and I can send it back to them four times and say, "no, this is not what I want." Though I rarely have to do that because they are professional. And so, yeah, I think they've been good and that's why I'm still advertising with them because I've had to sign a contract and the rates have gone up.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

Jee, I don't know. I'm assuming it's an easy read. I'm assuming its regional, I've never read it.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

So I think just...I think the key for me was the ad rep which was [my salesperson] who is now I think the executive of something and so I don't know if there's other people who are approaching the potential customers...I think probably at this point there are people under her, but her approach was not offensive, not pushy. She was just attentive, and if I said, "Well, talk to me in two months." In two months, she would either call or pop by and she doesn't get in my face and she doesn't tell me who my customers are. And I think that says a lot more or is much more interesting or appealing to potential advertiser than someone who is saying, "Oh, our

magazine is this or that.” Bull. That doesn’t mean crap to me. The bottom line to me is are they decent people that I can work with and is the price right.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Now I’m assuming that it’s a little more affluent customer, I mean...umm...individual just because of, it is a free publication, and it’s handed out in, like restaurants and stuff, you know, and If you’re not savvy or you can’t afford to eat out, you may not even see the publication. So, and in many ways I think that that means it’s more affluent or somewhat upper-middle class.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

Don’t know...again, I don’t have time to read it.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

N/A

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I’m really not sure...

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

I don’t have a clue who advertises, though the few that I’ve looked at...well not really looked at, but kind of noticed their names, I know that they are more high end. They’re more, umm, first off, those ads cost money, okay, and I have...I actually pay more in advertising than I pay for rent in this building which is unheard of in this business because antique shops do not advertise and if they do, they advertise in antique journals which is stupid as far as I’m concerned, but nonetheless, the point is is that those ads cost money and I am paying all I can for mine, and I

just...some months I can't even pay the bill, and I know that the bigger ads are paying more for it and they're pay for that plus I know that they're in the newspaper and the newspaper display ads are out the wahzoo! It's ridiculous, and who can afford them? So I know that they have to be selling a helluva lot more stuff and selling it at a helluva lot higher prices than I am in order to afford those ads, and I'm looking at them knowing that these are businesses that are established, not new businesses that are just doing the frills and not thinking about the long term...umm... I have a real strong business philosophy on prioritizing what you spend your money on...frills...I would want this place, you would not believe if I had the money, what this place would look like outside and inside, but I don't have the money, so I do what I can and after 4 ½ years I'm still achieving the look that I'm after, so that goes for advertising too. I've been approached by several other magazines. *InRegister* and all those and Society Life [*City Social*], you know, and those are really slick, beautiful magazines and very affluent readers and would be good customers but that want a fortune for [those ads]. So, you know, I know that the people that advertise in those things are higher, bigger, more...I think if many of those businesses came into [my] store, they would feel like they were slumming it. They would look at this place and think, "Oh my God! Can't get out of here fast enough." And I see them. I watch them walk in and I see their faces and I go, "Yeah, uh-huh. They've stumbled into the wrong part of town." They don't know what to do with this place because it is so radical to them.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

It's a quaint little town with about as many residents as fingers on my two hands.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Huge...loud...very different and kind of pretentious.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Right down the street. I've been there. I knew it was in St. Francisville forever, and I know that they recently, well, about two years ago moved down [to Baton Rouge] and they've had Christmas parties and I've been to those.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No! That's ridiculous! And I noticed that in the handout you gave me. What difference does it make. It didn't...they were...I've been working with them longer while they were in St. Francisville, which, I don't go there, they come here. It doesn't affect me at all.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I think readers feel the same way I do. They don't care! Baton Rouge has the potential. You know, that's where most of the money is, I would guess. Not saying that there aren't some affluent people and big bucks elsewhere. I think it's also by the name...I'll tell you one reason I picked *Country Roads*, too or considered it, I didn't...I forgot about this. I used to work for a CPA, and I used to do small business clerking. I did all of the books for like 45 businesses every month. That's what I did. I balanced their checkbook, I entered everything into our accounting program, I did the PNLs, I did everything and then I gave it to the CPA who did the CPA stuff. But one of our clients was the Oxbows Restaurant and they were...every month they wrote a check to *Country Roads*...and finally, I didn't know what *Country Roads* was, and I finally called them and said, "What is *Country Roads*?" because I wanted to know...part of my job was being nosy and making sure that I was posting things correctly for the accounting and so I called and said, "What is this?" and they said, "Oh, it's a magazine that we advertise in." well, you

know, I'm thinking that's ridiculous. I really said, "This is ridiculous. This little restaurant is advertising." And it wasn't until afterwards when I started my business that I found out this is a local publication and it specialized in "*country roads*." You know these little places like the Oxbow and other things and gave them exposure that most of us wouldn't know. So I'm assuming they're still doing that because that's valuable. I would want to know if I was going in that part of the country, if I was driving up to St. Francisville, what's up there. So I see that as a valuable thing to residents of Baton Rouge as well as obviously it can increase their pocketbook and the thickness of their magazine by dealing with advertisers in Baton Rouge.

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW #7 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

Since May of last year.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

We signed a 12 month contract in...umm...July I think, and since then, we've done it every month.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

Well, this new contract that we signed doesn't run out until June or July, so we'll advertise every month until then.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

I suppose circulation and who would read the magazine, of course.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

I guess, I don't know...the circulation is good, but if no one is reading it, then what's the point. That's why I chose *Iris*, too, because it was the type of person that would most likely come [into my shop].

What factor was least important? Why?

Umm...the least important thing...I don't know...I don't think there was necessarily one thing that stood out as being least important.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

You mean like a graphics designer? We do hire a designer who puts together our ads every month, and then he sends the ad directly to the magazines.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

He really doesn't try to get into who I choose to advertise with. He just makes the ads. (laughs)

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

That it's another bill! (laughs)

How large is your budget for advertising?

Right now, we only do *Country Roads*, *Iris* and *TownFavorites*. That seems to be enough for us.

How did you hear about CR?

My mom used to advertise in it when she first opened the business. When we reopened, she suggested that I try it again.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

I'm targeting what it was sold to me as. It was a female, 18 to 50-something...

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yes, I think the combination [of the three magazines] works...

What kind of people read CR?

I would say it's umm...women, although I look at it too. I would say anyone...I don't know how to answer that.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

That we have something for anybody looking for spiritual uplifting and relaxation.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Yeah, I do.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

Umm...I like the magazine. I think it's good.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

That it's another way to go...it's not...like Iris is geared to people who are into spiritual stuff...*Country Roads* is for people who are looking for cultural stuff.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

The differences...what makes it better than the rest.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I personally am...I'm more partial to *Country Roads* because it talks about an area where I also hangout which is St. Francisville. It covers more of a larger area than just the focus of the other magazines. And it's just more...it's not narrowly focused like other magazines.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I lived in another state for six years, and I relocated here early last year, so I really haven't read it that long.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Don't know...

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

No, I think it's the same as when my mom used it.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

Small-time shops and restaurants.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

I like it. I have a few friends there, and I like that it has a more tranquil feel.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Loud. Busy. People here really need my stuff! (laughs)

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Somewhere in Baton Rouge. I know that because you told me.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I don't even know that now. But I was fairly sure it wasn't like China or something!

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I think that most people are like me and they don't care.

APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW #8 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

For several years now.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

I've slacked off a bit.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

I am reshifting my advertising dollars.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

The number of people that will look at it. Quality of the people that read the magazine is also important.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Whether or not anyone's reading it.

What factor was least important? Why?

Probably, how much the ad costs or whether it has all color or some color.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

No, a publication like [Country Roads] I usually work with them, submit pictures, sketch out ideas and then they use their in-house people to do it.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

It's pretty much in line with what its counterparts are charging. I'm probably spending more with the newspaper, but I think it's worth it.

How large is your budget for advertising?

I would say...in a given year, including print, tv, radio, etc. we spend about...\$15-\$20,000 annually.

How did you hear about CR?

Well, we've had a magazine rack here for a few years, so I knew about the magazine and I read it occasionally.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Females middle 20s to mid-50s.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

I think that with *Country Roads*, I probably miss a lot of people just because they don't read it every month.

What kind of people read CR?

I think their demographic is similar. I think they are also...where do you live?

I live in Springlake off of Bluebonnet and Burbank.

Do you get *Country Roads* delivered to your house?

No. I pick it up from a restaurant or local shop.

So sometimes there may be a month or two that you don't see it. So there's a good chance I may not hit you every month? Whereas, if you read the newspaper, it's delivered.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

That I have nice, beautiful furniture in a variety of price ranges.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I think so. I think so. I like to think that we have a pretty steady stream of people coming in on a regular basis, so I think we are successful.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

It's a great publication. I just think I can reach...I think the people that read *Country Roads* probably also read the newspaper, so I feel like I can fit them and other people in the newspaper as opposed to just getting a selected few in *Country Roads*.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

That it's different from the other magazines in the area...and it is.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Selective audience, sense of neighborhood

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Quality wise it's good. They tend to go after a larger geographic area from Natchez to New Orleans, so I think the other publications are more specific to Baton Rouge, so I guess they can tell me that I could pull in people from a broader area.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I think they're about the same. It's a quality publication.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Yeah, I think so. Like I said, it's a great publication...really interesting to read...

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

No. I think they are just as happy with it as they were before.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

More medium to smaller businesses. I don't see as many Kirshman's, Kornmeyer's and other big retailers in it. Don't see Dillard's and those types of people.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

Uh...I guess the first thing I think of is small...almost rustic feeling.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Sophisticated.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

It used to be in St. Francisville, now it's in downtown Baton Rouge.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No, it had and continues to have no effect one way or another on my decision to advertise.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

They still put from Natchez to New Orleans on the cover, so I don't think a lot of people know this.

APPENDIX L

INTERVIEW #9 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

A little over a year...actually, it'll be like a year and a half. But we've advertised with *Country Roads* for the Mandeville store, too so it's actually been, I guess like two years.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

Umm...once a month.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We're going to keep the same schedule.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Mainly the audience, like who was going to pick up the magazine. You know, where the publication is going to be delivered, you know what I mean. I guess how far out in Louisiana that it's going to go.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Mainly just the audience is the main thing. Who's going to pick up the publication and actually come in like age groups and things like that. But the thing about that with *Country Roads* is that it's a little more adult oriented, you know. So a lot of, like, moms read it and then they bring their daughters in to buy like prom dresses and things like that. So that's good, and I know it goes out to a lot more of a bigger area of Louisiana than say like *The Reveille* or *Tiger Weekly* which is just kind of for LSU.

What factor was least important? Why?

Least important? The cost is a factor too, but I think that all of the ads in the area probably cost the same, so that would probably be the least important thing.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

No, we do it ourselves.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

Like I said, it's pretty comparable to others in the area.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Umm...I would say our budget is relatively small right now...we're not doing too much.

How did you hear about CR?

I don't know. I have no idea. Probably because we started off advertising the Mandeville store in the magazine, but I have never worked in that store. When this store opened, it was like a joint effort between the two stores.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Umm...18-35, women. I mean we really do have a lot of different age groups that shop here. We have an 80 year old customer who comes in here. Really! She's so cute too. So we have lot of...and the jewelry, I mean we have a lot of jewelry that anyone can wear, so...

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yes, I do.

What kind of people read CR?

The audience is a little bit older than the type of people we're looking for, I would say. But I think it helps. It's really the mothers or aunts or grandmothers that pick up the magazine and read the ads and then say, "Oh, did you hear about [the name of the store]? Let's go look at that." 'Cause a lot of times if it's a younger group of people [that shop] and then the parents usually pay for it.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

Fun. Fairly inexpensive. A good atmosphere and good customer service and trendy.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Yes.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I'm not really sure how to answer that. If you're asking whether we are satisfied, then yes we are.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

Umm...I'm not sure. Well the girl that is our [sales] person, whatever you want to call it, she's really cool. We love her. She has a great personality, she's always on time and you know, so she's really good salesperson wise.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Like I said before, that it reaches a larger audience because of the region that it...cause I know it goes out to a lot of different areas, so I guess that would be my answer.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Umm...I haven't really read [the others]. I mean, I've read a few of them, but I really like *Country Roads*. I think it has a lot more information in it, you know. I always like their covers, too. And they're thicker which interests me more, you know, and I like the dining, I know they have a dinning section, I really like that.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I haven't really read it that long...umm...I don't know if I could answer that.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

As far back as two years? Yes, I think it has the same appeal.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

No. As long as we've been advertising in it we still see a response so I don't think readers are changing their minds about it.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

Umm...let me look at the magazine. (She flips through the magazine as she talks) I think there is pretty much anything and everything including food, little stores. There are a lot of different advertisers.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

A small, cute little town. Nice people. Slower paced.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Bigger. More fast-paced...even...I would say it's sophisticated.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

No, I have no idea.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No, it's definitely not something I thought about and I don't think...knowing them and like knowing the way they, you know what I mean, and how good they are, I don't think it'll matter where they are. I still think they would be just as good wherever their main office is located. And since I've been here, it hasn't affected me because it's been here since I've been here.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I honestly don't even think people think about it, you know?

APPENDIX M

INTERVIEW #10 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

I've been with *Country Roads* off and on probably for eight years.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

Usually at least six times a year sometimes 8-10 but usually we have a six month contract and I spread that out throughout the year.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

I'll continue with *Country Roads*. *Country Roads* has been good for me, so I'll continue.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Umm...well I wanted to know, one how many people it was going to reach. What my target was versus what the publication's target was. And of course I'm looking at price. I'm also looking for especially in a monthly publication, I look for how many times that publication is going to be picked up and read in a month and I know that there are somethings that you simply pick up and read and then they go in the trash can. So for that, you are paying for a basically 30 day ad and you hope that you get at least 20 days out of it. So I look at things like that too.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

In the beginning it would have been the cost. I was looking for a way to keep my name out there and keep within my budget.

What factor was least important? Why?

The least important thing at that time...I don't know what I would have thought about to be the least important thing...You know I really don't know, there's just so many limited publications when you look to advertise and you're trying to get as much bang for your buck, I don't know that I had any discouragements in the beginning. I figured I'd give everyone a shot to see what it brought me.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

Umm, I do it myself and sometimes with the help of course of the publication that I'm using [their] graphics department until we get an ad that everybody's happy with.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

Well, I think compared to others which you do look for comparisons with that type of magazine, the price is very good. It's moderately under two of the other publications so it is one of the lower priced advertising rates, but compared to what you're getting with *Country Roads* and the way *Country Roads* is received, it's a very good price for the ad.

How large is your budget for advertising?

I have a very small tight budget. My advertising money is very limited.

How did you hear about CR?

Umm...I was familiar with *Country Roads*. I was a reader of *Country Roads*. I picked it up and I read the magazine, so I knew about *Country Roads* and at first I wasn't sure that that was the demographic I was after, but I tried it and it does hit my demographic.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Of course most people shop within ten miles of their house, so of course I'm sitting in the middle of my target audience, but it's a higher income demographic \$150-500K a year is the medium income. But they do travel, they do look for other entertainment venues, gallery openings which is why *Country Roads* event calendar is invaluable and it appeals to my customer. They want to know what's going on.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

I think, well in a combination of mediums, but yeah. And then I've got some long time here. I've got a loyal customer base built on several things, but yeah, *Country Roads* is certainly one of them.

What kind of people read CR?

I think that many of their readers are my demographic or the demographic I'm looking for...more affluent females with money to spend.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

I try to convey the image of some very, very nice things and that that can still be fun. It doesn't have to be intimidating and also that I have some very inexpensive things too that mix well with more expensive pieces of furniture. I just try to convey that we have fun place to come and an unusual place with things that you won't find anywhere else.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Sometimes I manage to do that, and sometimes I kind of fade into the background.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

[My sales person] is so sweet and, you know, we've got this big...I'll honestly tell her if I do or do not like something, and she'll honestly tell me if she thinks I should or should not do something, and one of my hang ups with my other publication is that I don't like being lost in a sea of ads. If [all of the ads] are down at the bottom of the page and I'm up reading all the articles at the top of the page, then I'm really not concerned with what those ads at the bottom of the page look like and if that article continues to the next page, I flip that page without even seeing the ads. So I like the fact that they do place ad placements one down here, one up here, one on this page, one on the other, you know. Their ads are placed on the pages to where they're not lost on the page, and I do like that. Ad versus editorial, the ad actually does stand out. So I do like that a lot. I have, consequently stopped advertising in another magazine because my ad continued to be down at the bottom of the page, and I didn't like spending that much money to be lost at the bottom of the page. That's a big advantage. I watch how they distribute it every month along with four other publications, and they all go out on the bench on the front porch, and I watch how they're taken. *Country Roads* is the first one that's out of stock on that porch, so I know it's a well received publication.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

Umm...they're very customer service oriented. They want you to be happy. They call, they do a follow-up about your ads, what things you want to change, what things you didn't like, etc. So they are... and they're community based and they're in the area, so I mean, to me it's a hard-working company that provides a good service and keeps their advertising rates at their lowest for their customers and tries to build a good working relationship.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

One of the good selling points to *Country Roads* which continues to keep me advertising with them is the events calendar. It's not in another publication that goes out in Baton Rouge. I mean it's an events calendar for the South Baton Rouge area. It's invaluable. People will pick it up at the first of the month and they're still referring to it on the twenty-fifth to see especially now with Mardi Gras season, it's a complete list of parades in...from New Orleans to St. Francisville. It's an invaluable resource and it's a great selling point in itself and they've got some great articles. It's a good local magazine.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

Well, in turn...in saying what I said earlier in the previous questions, *Country Roads* has hit its niche. It does have the events calendar, it is more indicative of the area happenings not necessarily individual parties, receptions or weddings...It's more of an event magazine. Things that are happening, things that are of interest to people and not targeted as a social magazine. It sets itself apart and has found its niche.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

Umm...certainly. I've watched the editorials become better, I've seen as the magazine's grown, you know, you get a longer list of advertisers. I look at those because I'm always interested to see who I'm in competition with. But the articles have been good.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

There have been more contributing factors and editors to the magazine which has been good for them, and I'm also watching it get a little more cultural and a lot more focused on the arts, which is great.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

If they've read the magazine for a while like I have, yes.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

You know, of course, I think that every advertiser strives to know their audience, but I do think that you do look for a certain type of customer. I'm sure there are certain areas where the magazine just doesn't appeal to them because they can hop on a plane and fly to wherever they are going, and they would have no use for [the magazine] but I think that mostly middle, lower-upper income families who are looking for things to do in the area...I think that it's a great magazine.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

I love St. Francisville. It's a lovely little city, and they have family in St. Francisville. They've lived there for so long, Dorcas knows everyone in town...you know, I mean they were family there.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

For them? New opportunities to get newer advertisers.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

I know they've moved to Baton Rouge, but I've not been to [their office] yet.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

I think it's going to help. I really do. It was probably harder for them to move, than it was for the advertisers to want it to move to Baton Rouge. Because I think it's going to open it up a little more to...you know, I think that they can go into Covington or a little bit of the Westbank and be in this area and still be centrally located here in Baton Rouge and in the outlying areas which I know that's what my customers look for. What's going on within a two mile drive of where you live and still have a nice day with your family. So I think it's going to be good for them. It's going to be easier for them to access the areas they need to access.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I don't think...readers probably didn't notice it except to read the change, but I don't think the readers would have noticed the change yet. I think they will because, of course, being centrally located is going to change alter the magazine itself, but as of yet, I don't think they've paid much attention to it.

APPENDIX N

INTERVIEW #11 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

Six months.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

We did it consecutively from last July to December.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We are planning to do it for about six months this year.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

I'm really big about relationships and how people work with me. They're very helpful. I love the staff at *Country Roads*. They do a lot of great things for us. They do great ads. They really understand our focus and where we are trying to go with the ad. They're really good clients at the salon, and they always invite us to things and give us things and I guess it's just a good relationship and I connect with them really well. Also, I called several people that advertised with them, and it worked for them. That was our deciding factor.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Being able to deal with advertisers. Some people don't know what focus you're going for or they don't...they've never stepped foot in your business. They don't know what your culture is like, what your image is like and they just try to create an ad or don't even try to create an ad, they want you to do it. If that was the case, and I had time to do it, then I wouldn't need them. So that's really big to me. Just connecting with the person and letting them make it easy for me.

What factor was least important? Why?

Least important? I don't know...

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

We do it ourselves. We usually just supply them with the pictures and the verbiage and kind of tell them what we're looking for and they design it.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

I would say they are reasonably priced.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Since we want a close relationship with the people we advertise with, we do a few magazines, one being *Country Roads*.

How did you hear about CR?

We do a lot of print right now, and I had never tried *Country Roads* so we wanted to try them to see how it worked out, and that's how we got started with them. They scheduled an appointment with me and...but that's not how I first heard about it. I first heard about it by just picking up a magazine...I don't know, it's just one of those things that you just know the name, just like *City Social*.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Probably a pretty broad demographic. 28 to 50. A lot of business owners. Female, obviously. Middle class to Upper Class. That's probably our demographic.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

Yeah. It even reaches some people we weren't expecting to hit.

What kind of people read CR?

I think maybe some of their readership might be different. We get a majority of people from the outside surrounding areas which we've noticed. We've actually got people from Natchez to come in. We had an event and had at least three people who saw the ad in *Country Roads*. The lady was like, "Yeah, I came all the way because I saw the ad." And we have clients who drive in from Natchez just to get a hair cut. We have people who drive from New Orleans, Lafayette, Alexandria, everywhere...but I guess it's probably worked best for us in the surrounding areas because people are always looking for a good salon. So it's worked well for us. I think they have a lot of good substance to their magazine, that people that...wouldn't be in our market would never care or read about.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

Classic and simple. We're really laid back, family-oriented, very...we're not snobbish, so we just like our ads to be simple and classic and just kind of speak for themselves...Customer service...some people are afraid to go into places because they're thinking, "How are they going to act?" But we're just really, really laid back here.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

Yes, especially when I see clients from Natchez come in.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

It's good for getting our name out to the outlying areas. Other magazines focus more on Baton Rouge which is good but this gives us...a different type of exposure.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

Antiques...antique places maybe...events that are going on in the surrounding areas, you know. Culture. I guess a little "countryish" but still great advertising and I think they still know that they can find out good information and good places to go to through it.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

I guess just because they did start in St. Francisville, they have so much influence in the surrounding areas, it just kind of depends on what you're trying to sell to what advertisers. If it's advertisers looking for a big hit in Baton Rouge, well, yeah, you'll probably get some, but you'll get a lot from the surrounding areas too. A lot of magazines don't have that to offer, that they have such as strong influence in the other areas like [*Country Roads*] does.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I think they all have their different niche, pretty much. I think I would rank it with *City Social*, just because *City Social* is flashy and it's all color and shiny. Although, we don't get a direct response from *City Social*. We don't because I think when people pick it up they might think, "This is a cheezy magazine." So I think that it works for *Country Roads* [that it's different], so I wouldn't say that one is better than the other. They all do different things.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I don't know, I didn't read it 5 years ago. (laughs)

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

N/A

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

Umm...I don't really ask them about the magazines I advertise in...I don't know.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

I guess I see more restaurants, antiques, furniture stores...shopping places. Like places to go to shop in Baton Rouge or new places in Baton Rouge. A lot of places that I've never even heard of except through our reps. There are some really unique, cool stores that you don't hear about advertising in their publication. Hard to find places.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

Well-off. People there have money.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

A mixture...of classes, of types of people.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Umm...I think it's just like really close around the corner (on Jefferson Highway) but that would probably not be right...

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No because I know that there's a lot of money in St. Francisville.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

Probably because that's how Baton Rouge is. I would think that's how advertisers, some people would look at it. It's probably a good move. It probably helped them too, but I don't see a difference. I'm just very open, and I have a lot of friends from that area. They are people that always come to Baton Rouge. They always do their shopping in Baton Rouge. They're always looking for places to come and they don't have...it's not like they are a big city there.

APPENDIX O

INTERVIEW #12 (NEWCOMER)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

I've been advertising for...umm...I'd said it's been about seven months.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

Well, the time I've been with *Country Roads*, I've done it every month.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

I'm pretty sure that I'll be consistent with it. I may skip a few months, you know, during the summer time, but other than that...

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Well, if I had to write a list, I would say the cost...coverage, like where their magazine goes out, who reads the magazine and the reputation of the magazine.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

Probably the reputation. Honestly, if it cost \$2 to run a full-page ad in a magazine but nobody thinks it's worth the effort to read it or the paper it's printed on, then that's not where I need to be. Also, it had to be a good fit for me in terms of who was going to be reading the magazine.

What factor was least important? Why?

The least important thing to me at the time was how much the ad cost...I mean, don't get me wrong. I didn't want to pay a million bucks for an ad, but the reputation of the overall magazine was more important.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

We actually do neither. Our [Country Roads] sales rep. takes pictures and designs the ad with their graphics designer. They do a much better job than I ever could.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

N/A

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

Well...I think, considering the good work they do, the price is very reasonable. Really. I get so much exposure that I don't think twice about writing the check every month.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Umm...I think we spend an average of about \$3,000 a year with each magazine and right now we advertise in two magazines.

How did you hear about CR?

I've lived in Baton Rouge all my life, and I've always loved to pick up the magazine whenever I saw it around town. Naturally, when I opened my business, I thought of it first.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Anyone who is looking to eat a nice, light meal in this area. There are so many businesses around here that want a nice, healthy alternative.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

I think it does. Yes, because we've seen people come in because they saw our ad.

What kind of people read CR?

I think primarily women who are mid-20s to 60+

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

The image of good food at reasonable prices. Healthy doesn't have to mean tasteless.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

I think we've been doing a good job.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

It meets all of our needs. Sometimes, people would come in and say they didn't even know about us until they saw our ad in *Country Roads*.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

If I remember correctly, the sales rep. stressed that they have a larger coverage area, so I guess they want us to know that they reach more people.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

Umm...that they specialize in highlighting more artsy, cultural events. There's always something new to learn.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I mean, like I said, they are definitely more focused on being informative than...I don't want to sound mean but, some magazines seem "uppity."

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

No. No I don't. I think they have consistently written about out-of-the-way places, and people love them for it.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Sure they do! They've actually probably gotten better.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

As a reader myself, I see the improvements, so I'm sure other readers see it.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

Well, I would say it's mainly small businesses here or in other areas that are looking for broader exposure.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

Cute, cute, cute! It's a wonderful hidden treasure.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Baton Rouge to me is just like any other capital city. It's filled with politicians and business people, but it does have its good points, just look at our football teams!

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

Yes, they are in an old house on St. Joseph Street. I know because I asked my salesperson once.

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No. I mean, I like the fact that they are close, but I really don't ever have a need to go [to their office]. They come to me. Isn't that great!

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

Really and truly...I doubt that anybody knows. In fact, they did know, they would probably worry about it losing its rural, small-town...feel.

APPENDIX P

INTERVIEW #13 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

We started advertising...we probably picked up in the fall of 2000...so I'd say almost four years, now.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

At first, we did it off and on because we didn't really want to commit to a long agreement or sign a contract at the beginning. We wanted to try it some first...

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We're pretty consistent now. We do it about eight to nine times a year on average. It's much easier to commit to it now that we kind of know what to expect.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

Country Roads wasn't our first try at advertising. We placed ads in a couple of, what we thought were the more traditional magazines...*City Social* and *InRegister*...but they were hitting the same market. I was a reader of *Country Roads*, and I realized that they targeted a whole new...they reached a whole new type of person.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

The difference in the make up of the audience.

What factor was least important? Why?

City Social and *InRegister* are both really slick, sophisticated looking magazines, but when it came to *Country Roads*, it really didn't matter to me that they weren't printing on nicer paper.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

Yes. We have a graphic designer who actually designs ads for us and a couple of other businesses that advertise in *Country Roads*, but she's not what I would call an agency. She's kind of a one woman show.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

Actually, when I started thinking about advertising with [*Country Roads*], I asked [our graphics designer] what her experiences were working with them and that actually helped me feel better about giving them a chance.

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

When I saw their prices, I thought they were pretty much in line with what everyone else was charging.

How large is your budget for advertising?

Whew! Well, we've grown and with that growth has come the ability...and almost I would say the need to try different things advertising wise. We're very comfortable with the amount of money we spend.

How did you hear about CR?

I read the magazine way before I decided to start advertising.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Women who are probably in their mid-20s to mid-40s. Someone who likes to be stylish.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

When I look at the traffic that comes in, it's pretty obvious that we are connecting with the type of people we want.

What kind of people read CR?

Our "ideal client" is definitely a part of the segment of readers, but I think that younger and older women read it too...and men...no one type of person reads it. I think everyone can appreciate it.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

We try to communicate that we are classy, stylish...umm...we offer a variety of styles and we have something for just about everyone.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

In some form or fashion, we're reaching people if it's through word-of-mouth, walk-in traffic, or anything else.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

I like the magazine. I think that the people that put it together work really hard to make a totally different type of magazine than anybody else in the area. I don't think they try to be mainstream. They do their own thing.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

They want to educate us about different things going on around here...that we...there's something else to do around the state.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

What should they emphasize? Umm...I think they should keep pushing what they already do which is cultural events from Natchez to New Orleans.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I like it. It helps me get to a different type of reader than [the ones] I get with the other magazines like *City Social*. It has a different...a different feel...or a different area that it focuses on.

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

No. They are still the magazine with the calendar of things...cultural things to do.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Nothing has really changed about the magazine to my knowledge...I think that just more people are starting to read the magazine and advertise in it.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

No. I'm a reader so I feel pretty confident in saying that I don't think readers have noticed anything different.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

We're all very different. Some of us are a little more high end than others, but I think we are all looking for the same type of person to come into our stores. Otherwise, we wouldn't have all chosen to advertise with [*Country Roads*].

How would you describe St. Francisville?

Quaint...small...quiet.

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

Big...loud...more of a “big-city” feel.

Do you know where CR’s headquarters is located?

You know, I’ve actually never been to their office. I never thought about it before...I guess I don’t know.

Did the location of the magazine’s headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

No. I don’t really have a need to go to their place because my ad is done by my designer and my salesperson comes here to talk to me when she needs to. The magazines are delivered here, so I never really had to think about it.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

I guess readers feel the same way I do...They pick up the magazine from the same places, so they don’t really have to think about it either.

Do you consider the magazine to be a part of the BR community?

That’s tough because they’re really not bound to any one city. They kind of hover over a group of cities and areas.

APPENDIX Q

INTERVIEW #14 (LOYALIST)

How long have you been advertising with Country Roads?

Well, I just came into this position in the summer of last year...but I think we had been doing it pretty frequently for the past few years.

How frequently would you say you advertise per year?

We do it every month except for a few slow times in the year.

How often do you plan to advertise in 2004?

We've signed an agreement similar to the ones we've done in the past. We'll do it almost every month.

What factors were important to you when you were beginning to determine which magazines to advertise in?

I don't know exactly what the main concerns were when they first sat down to figure out where to focus the advertising dollars, but I would imagine that they wanted to be in a publication that was well read by the people they were targeting...and still are targeting. It was probably also an issue of what would fit in the budget.

What factor was absolutely the most important? Why?

It was probably the fact that the type of people we are targeting read the magazine and are likely to think about us.

What factor was least important? Why?

That's hard for me to answer just because I wasn't involved at the time enough to know what wasn't really that important.

Do you hire an advertising agency to design your advertising or do you design the ads yourself?

We do have someone who coordinates all of our marketing efforts. He takes care of getting someone to put the actual ad together, though.

If you hire an advertising agency, do they also determine which publications you advertise in?

Yes. [He] is the one who helps us decide how to best use our advertising dollars. That's his main reason for working with us. He makes the process effortless for us.

What image do you connect to the price of the advertising?

I don't think I have any image of the price really. We're very...we're sort of removed from the process. If I had to guess, I'd say it's probably pretty close to what others are wanting.

How large is your budget for advertising?

We spend aboutwe spend nearly \$10,000 on print advertising alone because we do two magazines, and we do the paper.

How did you hear about CR?

I heard about it because we were already advertising with them and they would drop a couple of copies off for us so that we could see our ad.

Who is your target audience when advertising?

Baby-boomers. Economically speaking, we're looking for middle to upper-middle class.

Do you think that your advertising reaches the segments you wish/aim to reach?

I don't think we would keep the same formula if it wasn't working.

What kind of people read CR?

I think the audience we're looking for...more women than men, but...the two [audiences] are very similar.

What image do you want to communicate to your customers?

We want the readers to know that they should think of us first when they are looking for our particular service.

Do you think that you succeed in communicating the image you aim to?

If I'm honest, I would say that sometimes we are and sometimes we aren't. Hopefully, more often than not, we are.

To what degree do you think CR meets your needs?

It meets all of our needs because it helps us balance our advertising dollars. It's very different from the other magazines we advertise in and even, I think the newspaper.

What image do you think CR wants you to have about the magazine?

It's a good investment, and it's worth the dollars we spend on it every month.

What characteristics do you think CR should emphasize in its marketing?

They have so much to offer in the way of culture. One of my favorite things about the magazine is that every month there's a new piece of artwork on the cover. Where else can you find that

type of...promotion for the average starving artist? There's also this great list of things to do for the entire month. Again these are things you don't really see in other publications.

If you compared CR to other area magazines, how would you characterize it?

I think I just answered that question. (laughs)

Do you think the image of CR has changed in the last five years?

I'm not able to say only because I haven't looked at the magazine that long.

Do you think older issues of the magazine are the same as the new issues in terms of quality and appeal?

Just within the past few months that I've been familiar with the magazine, I haven't really noticed an attempt by them to change their image. Either that means they haven't been very successful with their plan or they haven't changed their image.

Do you think that readers perceive any change in the image of CR?

I don't think so, but I could have missed something drastic.

How would you characterize other CR advertisers?

There isn't any one type of advertisers, I don't think. I mean, look at us. You don't see many other businesses that do what we do in the magazine. Every business is different from the next.

How would you describe St. Francisville?

I actually have family there. A few cousins. I like St. Francisville, in doses. It's too quiet for me. I think St. Francisville is so much like what life must have been like before computers and cell phones took over. (laughs)

How would you describe Baton Rouge?

The direct opposite of St. Francisville. [Baton Rouge] tries really hard to keep up. Where I think St. Francisville is...I don't want to say "outdated," but they don't want to always have the latest and the greatest technothingsamajig. Baton Rouge always wants to be upgraded. Just look at all of the talk about comparing it to Austin, Texas.

Do you know where CR's headquarters is located?

They are...hmm...you know what? I don't know. Did I fail the test" (laughs)

Did the location of the magazine's headquarters affect your desire to advertise with the magazine?

Obviously not because I didn't know about it. I really don't know that it was a big issue when we first started advertising, so I guess if I could change one of my answers I would say that this was probably the least important thing.

What signals do you think that BR as the location of the headquarters sends to the readers of the magazine?

Do they even know about? I don't know. Have you asked readers about it?

APPENDIX R

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES FOX-SMITH AND DORCAS BROWN

Interviewer: Basically, the first chapter talks about the fact that in September, Country Roads will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Over the twenty years, readers have seen a growth and change in the magazine. From the way it looks to the content to the distribution and it sort of chronicals all of the things that have happened over the years.

Hopefully, through the interview, I'll get a little more background information and be able to add.... I also want to emphasize that I am looking at this from a PR standpoint. I want to look at the thought process behind the move using some of the analyses that public relations practitioners use for example the SWOT analysis and the RACE method. What research did you conduct, what action did you take, what type of communication was used, and finally evaluation which is my role in this process. I want to see how successful the campaign was.

James: It will be difficult to quantify.

Interviewer: It will and I would like to you to give me input and suggestions on how best to do that. Another interesting point that I wanted to look at is not only how the readers perceive you, but how did the organization change with the move. Has editorial content shifted involuntarily. For example, I've been over the last few weeks, looking at each magazine issue from May 2001 to May 2003, and I've done a content analysis of the number of Tittles and Jots entries, etc...

Dorcas: This is probably going to be very good for us!

James: *Quite a learning experience!*

Interviewer: *Ultimately, everything that I glean from this, every bit of information, everything that I put into it is yours. This is something that I want you to benefit from.*

Dorcas: I'm sure we will!

Interviewer: *I want this to be something that you can use in the future. Maybe you can use the method that I establish as a way to look at new projects. Maybe it will influence how you track and evaluate them. The process was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I thought, "Okay! I'll read the last twenty four issues." It took me a lot longer than I originally thought because I had to figure out what I was looking for. Was I looking for an increase in Baton Rouge entries (even though I know that that wasn't your intent). I also had to create regions. Not just the territorial regions that we use in sales. I had to figure out the best way to do that. I looked at the Tittles and Jots section and then the pages and pages of Calendar of Events entries. It was really learning experience. Then I looked at the articles and finally advertisers. I went through each director of merchants and counted every advertiser, then categorized them by region.*

James: What did you find?

Interviewer: *I have not yet analyzed it. I just finished Sunday. But it took me the longest to figure out what I was looking for and what I wanted to show. Ultimately, what I wanted to show*

was that in 2001, this is what happened. In 2002, it either increased or decreased. The same for 2003. I wanted to show the correlation between whether there were increases or decreases.

James: What's going to be so difficult, I think is separating how much a change in the economic climate has to affect a magazine like ours. Because 2000 and 2001, without a doubt, were such different years from 2002 and 2003. I could see doing it over twenty years.

Interviewer: *Initially, that was my goal! Initially, I thought, well I will just do a historical look at Country Roads, and that'll be it. But I thought "That's like saying I'm going to go look at the history of Louisiana." There is so much to look at, and I had to do something that was more specific. So I said, let's look at the move. That's why I decided to look at the year 2001-2002 as a foundation on which to examine 2002-2003.*

The problem is, and this is something that I need to explain in detail in the methodology chapter, is that SO many different things affect sales. Yes, we hope that the survey will show that readers saw Country Roads more, they felt like it was more of a Baton Rouge publication. That is why I wanted to do a two-part study. I think that just doing a content analysis of the issues wouldn't give a true depiction of what was going on during that time period.

Hopefully, the survey will show that maybe a few more advertisers thought about running in Country Roads.

James: That's right. So if you take it from the editorial standpoint, then to some extent you minimize the influence of the economy on the product, and I suppose you can also extrapolate, if you have more readers, if you have a broader readership base to the tune of if all economic things were equal then you would have a bigger advertising base.

Interviewer: *So, it's tough because there are factors that we can't control, but I'm hoping that it will be something that you can benefit from.*

Dorcas: We are so excited!

Interviewer: *I remember, the first time we met, you (Dorcas) were telling me how it started off as something so small and look where you are now. So I thought, "let's see how that happened." It just turned out to be something huge. That's a book waiting to happen.*

Dorcas: James is going to write a book about *Country Roads* (laughs).

Interviewer: *In my content analysis, I reviewed each Reflections to see if there was a mention of the impending move, but it was just mentioned in the June issue and the masthead changed and that was it.*

James: I'm afraid that any sense of using reflections for what I should use reflections for (what's going on in the magazine) generally gets lost in my verbosity.

Interviewer: *(laughs)* Well, I wanted this to be a sort of brainstorming session so that you could tell me what you'd like to see in the study.

James: Well, the first thing that I'd like to see is it work for you. I mean, it's very difficult. The way the *Country Roads* has evolved, to a certain extent, has been quite a sort of morphous evolution for us as well because what we expected of it has definitely evolved as time has gone by, as we have become more experienced. At least I can say that for Ashley and myself. What our perception of what was and what *Country Roads* could be and should be for its audience has certainly developed as I have read more widely and as I have put out issue after issue.

I've really come to feel like it needs to be more than what it originally started out to be. Dorcas, you can jump in if I'm wrong, but it needs to be a venue in which to showcase how people are living in the small country towns around them. I wanted it to bring about a regional perception whereas initially, people didn't know what was going on around them. In a rural area where you don't have a lot of people, you have a gain when you have some sort of regional perspective.

It became increasingly clear to us that the magazine could really work in and out of Baton Rouge. The people who live in St. Francisville or in Natchez have to come to Baton Rouge. But the people in Baton Rouge have an almost irresistible pull for the smaller town existence that isn't necessarily there for them anymore because Baton Rouge has grown. It is not a small, southern town anymore and I think that the way that we have mapped the way the editorial content has gone was to want it to provide that basic level of information for people living in both those communities.

People ought to be able to take advantage of the area around them both from the city to the country and from the country to the city. Because in places like St. Francisville, the area in which, regionally, the magazine was inspired there is an almost magnetic pull for people that love something intangible about St. Francisville. What I think it is is that it reminds everyone of that little town where they grew up. I think there's something about it because you just...

Over the years people come running up to me saying, "I just love St. Francisville!" and I want to say "WHY?" I mean it's pretty, yes. It's small, people still wave at you on the street. It still has a local café where EVERYBODY goes on Friday night. You still know everyone, but as a tourist, after you've visited the antebellum houses and after you've walked up and down the main street and visited three or four antique shops, there's not a hell of a lot to do. It's as though you can fill the day with things to do, but there's a feeling about St. Francisville. There's something about it that has transcended the drawbacks of the modern age.

Interviewer: *Meredith (the advertising coordinator) said that when she moved into St. Francisville, the first thing she thought was "This is Pleasantville! This is Smalltown, America" It's exactly what people try to capture on the screen when they want to show the typical American small town.*

Dorcas: That's exactly right. This is a town that has three red lights. (laughs)

James: And that's something that we struggled with because as the magazine grew the readership grew and we have certainly benefited from being based and known and associated with St. Francisville; but as our readership grew and grew and grew into Ascension Parish and the Northshore, we had to really find a way to reconcile the fact that it was difficult for us to grow as a business based in that small town with the fact that our whole aesthetic and our whole model of how to get the information and what kinds of things were valuable to know for a reader, were based around that local.

I would say, we probably started to think about moving from a very practical standpoint. We had to figure out how we were going to be able to offer our salespeople a good working environment if we are 35 miles out of our primary sales market. How are we going to be able to approach an advertiser who wants to support their local region if we're not local to them. How are we going to make it a good supportive place to work if our sales people are working out of a little satellite office on Jefferson Highway, which is what we had before, and anytime you wanted to talk to a production person or an editorial person or an administrative person, you've got to drive to St. Francisville to do it. Those were all practical concerns. We did that through 2001, and it made things really difficult.

Dorcas: One of the biggest reason that we came to Baton Rouge was to be in the same place. It was to get all the staff to centralize from the practical standpoint.

James: But the deal was how to do that without losing that fundamental, magical appeal that comes from a whimsical, culturally enlightening publication that's done in a small town that everyone wants to have a little part of.

When you see a middle aged lady clutching an issue of the magazine to her chest, and she says "I just love everything about the magazine," you know what they're thinking of. They are thinking of the place where people wave on the street, and that was a really difficult decision to make, and it may not have happened when it did if it hadn't been for a tough economic year last year and us having to think about ways that we could broaden our market and our readership as well.

Dorcas: Because my territory is saturated. I sell almost everybody in St. Francisville. There is no growth in my territory. Maybe Natchez some, but basically, I have sold my territory. So in order to economically be where we needed to be, because this (Baton Rouge) is where the growth is, the region to the south, we felt like we needed to get here.

Interviewer: *How did St. Francisville and its readers react to the move?*

Dorcas: Most everybody that I talked to understood the economics of it. They expressed sadness that we thought we had to leave town...but most of them after you explained the reasons...

James: Anybody who was in business understood.

Dorcas: And they knew that we were going where the growth was. We had to get in where the growth was.

James: And the other thing is that we felt that, editorially speaking, we could do the exact same thing for St. Francisville from here. Maybe you'll find differently, but I don't think that the editorial ratio of entries from the West Feliciana area has changed. If anything, it has gone up because of a perceived notion...

Dorcas: Because I'm always complaining "Take care of St. Francisville!"

James: There's only a finite number of activities going on in St. Francisville, and what there is, we do attempt to cover as much as we can.

Interviewer: *Just from what I remember in my content analysis of 2001-2003, and you may need to tell me if I need to go back a few more years, Baton Rouge has always been the leading region in terms of number of entries and advertisers.*

Dorcas: Basically because there is more stuff going on in Baton Rouge, and it's easier. Baton Rouge is much more organized about getting information to you.

James: I'll certainly write more about St. Francisville things than I would...Sorrento! But there's more going on in St. Francisville than in Sorrento. I mean I don't have any type of

perception system or quota...of course, I don't think about those things, but for the most part in Cuisines and Weekends away, I'll try to be as broad as I can.

Interviewer: *I don't have the numbers in front of me, but I believe the New Orleans area seems to have grown a bit in the last year.*

James: Editorially?

Interviewer: *No, in the number of advertisers. Ascension Parish helps a lot.*

Dorcas: Really? I didn't think you would see a big change. Especially since we quit delivering there.

Interviewer: *By counting the number of Ascension Parish ads, it makes it look like there is an increase, so I'll definitely have to make a note...*

Dorcas: I think of Ascension Parish as more Greater Baton Rouge than New Orleans, but I guess it is closer than...

Interviewer: *Well, I looked at a radius around Baton Rouge. They fell a little bit outside of the range. But ultimately, I hope you find this study interesting and useful.*

Dorcas: I know that we will!

Interviewer: *I am just trying to wrap my brain around the best way to get the information out in a clear and concise way that is not really muddled by details that you couldn't control, and if it is then I want to make sure that I make that clear.*

Dorcas: Your professor thinks that this is a good topic?

Interviewer: *Gene Sands, the Executive Director of University Relations at LSU is very familiar with the publication. He can't wait to visit the Baton Rouge office. He didn't realize that we had moved to Baton Rouge, so that made me want to do the study even more.*

James: That used to happen to us all the time. People like the Business Report and other publications used to put out a report on area publications and these tiny little, piddly 16-page rags were on there and this was when we were printing 100-112 pages each issue and they weren't listing us even though just our Baton Rouge based advertisers would have been 3-5 times that of these other publications.

Dorcas: The perception was that we were not a "Baton Rouge" publication.

James: Rikki, the sales manager, may be able to give you a better sense than me of the obstacles they faced. I think you'll find that people said that this wasn't a Baton Rouge magazine. We needed to fix that. We needed to move the center of that region of growth. There definitely being

a perception of the capital region with these nine parishes, East Baton Rouge and the parishes that touch it. We are ecstatic that people are beginning to think of us that way.

Dorcas: That's us!

James: Right. That is exactly our region and delivery pattern and our circulation model. And when we started to see where people were reading it...surely, people were reading it in St. Francisville, but about 70% of our readers are from Baton Rouge and have been. And that made us think, well we need to get closer to them. We can solve the problem of having two split offices by building the organization into a single cohesive unit, and we can be much much closer to the center of our readership area. Geographically, it is entirely the center of what we write about. It's not where we began, but it is the center. It's the center that everything else feeds into. St. Francisville, love it as much as we do, will never be the center.

Dorcas: It was at one time, but it isn't anymore.

James: Yes. So I guess what we did was shift the center. But, also, what we were doing, editorially speaking, wasn't really affected by moving particularly, only that we could do a better job if we were here because more information comes to us. I mean, I have seen a massive increase in the amount of information that finds its way to us now as far as becoming a better calendar and a more inclusive calendar.

I think in the last year or two, the idea of the magazine being, I guess a smaller town obviously, pared down version, of doing for this town what *The New Yorker* does for its region. I don't know if you've read *The New Yorker* recently, but its worth a look at it to illustrate what I try to do with the calendar every month. Their cultural calendar is sublime! It's beautifully written. It isn't just listings and it gives more details about the events. It covers everything from music, theater, the arts to gallery exhibits, museum stuff, architectural issues, etc. It does it for the city of Brooklyn, New York, and the surrounding areas and it is very attractively displayed.

I think that you should probably talk to Anna, the art director, about this because it was Anna who initially presented the idea. She said she wanted to do something like *The New Yorker*, which I thought was a happy accident that I was trying to do something like it also.

Dorcas: Absolutely! When Anna and I first talked about what we wanted to do and what we wanted it to look like, she pulled a *New Yorker* out and said, "This is what it should look like!"

James: And it's also some of the most beautiful journalism in America. The quality of it is just better than anything else out there.

Dorcas: And that's what we try to do here.

James: But now what I want the magazine to be is the cultural guide to activities and events within this area. I want gradually for the feature focuses to take a bit of a more challenging standpoint. Maybe touch on a few issues that are maybe a little bit more...I wouldn't say

controversial, but not so clear cut perhaps. Just to make it as thought provoking as we can while providing the very best guide to cultural events we can. I do think that we can do that better here than we can in St. Francisville.

Dorcas: What else do you need to know?

Interviewer: *You've already answered a lot of the questions I wanted to ask. For more specifics on the move, I'll need to talk to Ashley because she was instrumental in making a lot of the decisions like when and where to move.*

James: We spent a lot of time looking for a place to buy. We felt like it was vital that we were downtown, and we looked hard for six or nine months and we couldn't find anything that was as appropriate as [the building we are in now]. We still want to buy a building, but we have a lease here, and I don't think we would go very far from downtown either because I really think this is where the future and big growth in Baton Rouge will be.

Interviewer: *Especially with the Red Stick Renaissance.*

James: Well there's another thing, an obvious thing about coming downtown was that we never would have gotten the *Red Stick* if Jeff Fluhr hadn't come waving the *Menu Collection* and asking if there was any way that we thought it was possible to do something like it for downtown.

Interviewer: *It is so amazing that you have been here for a year while your major competitors like InRegister, City Social and The South Baton Rouge Journal have been here since their inception, and they approached you to do a publication about downtown. I think that says a lot about the reputation of Country Roads.*

James: I know why Jeff came. It was because he saw the *Menu Collection* and thought there was a possibility of doing something like it. At that stage they had looked at it and come to the conclusion that it would be impossible to get something like it for Baton Rouge after looking at what it would cost to print one. But they hadn't been thinking to find someone who would produce it, go out and sell it, and cover the cost of doing it through them. So that is an instant...if there was one thing that covered the fear of moving, instantly the *Red Stick* did.

Interviewers: *I know that the strengths of your organization are your reputation, strong editorial content and longevity in the industry. What were some of the opportunities you saw going into the move? What were the threats?*

Dorcas: Well, I guess the first threat was that we would lose the base in St. Francisville. It hasn't happened so much. We've lost a few, but for the most part, it's the same. The economic situation was different that year also.

James: Added competition was definitely a threat.

Dorcas: But I hadn't had anyone actually fall out with me for moving. For one thing, because I stayed there that hasn't been the case.

Interviewer: *Was your competition any different?*

James: Yes...actually not really because, even in St. Francisville, our sales people were competition against the same publications (*The Journal*, *City Social*, *InRegister*) were all walking in trying to get into ad budgets. The move allowed us to be so much more of a part of the business community and to have visual presence.

Interviewer: *What do you see for the future of Country Roads and how did the move play into that?*

James: I envision that it [the move] will make more special projects a possibility and the ones that we've got stronger. We've had other people since the *Red Stick* has come out, kind of do that same thing that happened with the *Menu Collection*. They say "Oh, could you do this for our neighborhood?" (laughs) But we'll see if, down the road, there is somehow a way that we could offer a product or service for them.

As far as the readership goes, the one thing that we know we need to do is to begin to market the magazine more broadly. Not simply using the fact that we put 30,000 copies out a month to justify that as our marketing and say "We don't need to do anything else." We might be able to raise the perception of brand awareness with *Country Roads* through being here [Baton Rouge]

because we if we can have everybody in Baton Rouge knowing what *Country Roads* is and what it offers...It doesn't even matter if not everyone is reading it.

The Baton Rouge Business Report, even though they print 12,000 copies a month, and they charge what for their ads? That's brilliant! They don't care if not everyone reads it. The people that do read it know about it and so does everyone else. I think that that to a certain extent is what should be happening to *Country Roads*. Because as we talked about before, the fact that the magazine was closely associated with St. Francisville before was a very good thing because it was reminiscent of an easier more simplified time and something that a lot of people aspire to. The flip side is that *InRegister* could go to our advertisers and say "Country is what you get when you get *Country Roads*!" They could say that and there was nothing about the magazine to challenge that. The thing is that we are much more than that and the times when people say, "What is *Country Roads*? Isn't that little antiques magazine?" and you look at them and think "Obviously, you've never cracked a page!" Being here gives us a much better chance that nobody needs to stumble around under that misconception.

Interviewer: *It's almost like a cult following. People look for it, they are willing to pay for it...Did you ever think that it would be this huge?*

Dorcas: From the very beginning, when I did *Country Roads*, I thought it would be a tourist magazine. I did it for the tourist so that they would know about my little territory. But it was the local people who were just so thrilled! That was the first indication that it could be that way.

Now, I have transformed that to Jamie's editorial, where he has created that cult following, and it just worked.

James: Again, I never set out to create a following. Maybe that's what it is about the magazine. To be honest the editorial is a result of an evolution, more than it is sitting down and deciding, "We're going to create a business plan to get this kind of reader, and we're going to keep them by having articles on this that and the other." I think that is why a lot of publications and other stuff out there feel fake. It feels like it is the result of manipulation and marketing. We just have never really done it that way. Not because we didn't think it was a good idea, but because we couldn't afford it and had no idea how to do it. At the same token, in the end, it has created a more real product.

When I wrote "Reflections," I didn't set out to create a cult following, I set out to write something that I would like to read and not just, "Oh God, I've got to fill half a page. I'll just say what's going on in the office." We try to do something more.

Dorcas: But it has created a following. The same way that they open to read the Mosaic Garden ad, the first thing people say is "I read Jamie's reflections to see what's going on!" It really has created that personal, you're a part of the cult, feeling.

James: The most terrifying thing in the world is the day before press and me having nothing to write because nothing of interest has happened. I've also got to try to avoid always writing about Mathilde [his newborn daughter].

Interviewer: *But I think there is something endearing about that. It makes people feel like they know you. People like the fact that they know you.*

James: People say that all the time. I don't read a lot of stuff that is written around here because it is not particularly well written. I cringe at some of the things that are out there and I can't bear the thought of the magazine going out and someone saying "Oh dear! That's not good."

Interviewer: *Thank you both so much! I appreciate you taking out the time.*

Dorcas: This was fun! We need to do this again.

James: Let's keep talking about it because I think it's very good for us. Quite honestly, in all the year's we've done this, we have never sat down and done a content analysis of the change of the magazine. I guess I kind of do it by feel.

Interviewer: *Do you think that I should go back a few more years in my research?*

James: I think you'll find if you go back to 1996-1998, you would find a very different publication. Ashley and I got involved in late 1995.

Dorcas: When did you first get involved in editorial? 1997? Late 1996? There was a point when Ashley and James were learning everything from deliver to ad sales and then there was a point

when we departmentalized and James was in editorial, Ashely was in management and I was doing sales.

James: That was barely 1996. It wasn't very long. It became very clear that I couldn't sell an ad if I wanted to (laughs).

Dorcas: And I said, "James, you take over the calendar! I'm going to sell."

James: But I think you'll find a different magazine in those years. I feel like I know editorially what I am trying to achieve. I know that the magazine's place is to be the last word on cultural activities. It's become clear that that is what's missing [in this region]. It's also become clear that there is not quite another magazine like us. There are alternative news weeklies, and there are city regional magazines and there are lifestyle magazines and there are home magazines, but we don't really fit into any of those niches which has its positives and its negatives. The positives are the there is not one out there who is doing quite the same thing and there is no one there to copy it. The negatives are that there is no one to copy from and it's not easy always if you are selling it for people to easily grasp who you are and who your readership is or should be.

Dorcas: If they don't know, it's hard to tell them and you kind of have to have someone there to tell them, " Oh, that's *Country Roads*! I read that all the time."

James: I feel like its future and strength is to be the cultural events guide of the region and I feel like, if my greatest goal for it would be realized, it would be to foster a stronger sense...a

stronger perception of regionality here. Stop people from thinking of it as a Natchez or Baton Rouge or St. Francisville publication, but to think regionally.

Dorcas: And to think about what the region has to offer which is so diverse.

James: It's also the river. If you go back prior to everything traveling by road, you'll find that the river was what connected the region, and if you go back to Natchez, people there have relatives in New Orleans and Baton Rouge because everyone was connected by the river. It really does function as a region on everything but its tourism and the way people think about the around them. They are related to people in these areas, but they don't necessarily think of it as one large asset in a way.

I think for tourism, this area has a tremendous potential to have a national and international tourist draw that is not just New Orleans or is not just Natchez or is not just the Felicianas because it has a lot things that are in common and connected by that river corridor and I would love for the magazine to be apart of encouraging that.

Interviewer: *Thank you very much for your time!*

VITA

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